

THE One
ATARI ST
AMIGA
PC
FOR 16-BIT GAMES
JANUARY 1989
ISSUE FOUR
AN EMAP PUBLICATION
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REVIEW
TV Sports Football
REVIEW
Double Dragon
REVIEW
ThunderBlade
SHOOT THE MOON
ROBOCOP
PART FILM, PART GAME, ALL ACTION.
ROCKET RANGER
PLAYERS GUIDE



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THE ONE

CONT



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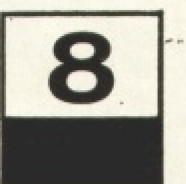
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Special Thanks, Merry Xmas & Happy New Year To: Anyone nice. Like Richard Slater (cover A/W, and "masking up those bloody pictures"). And Tom 'Cruise' Glenister – for his technical assistance.



LETTERS

It's been three months in the making, but it's finally arrived... a whole page of reader quips and queries.

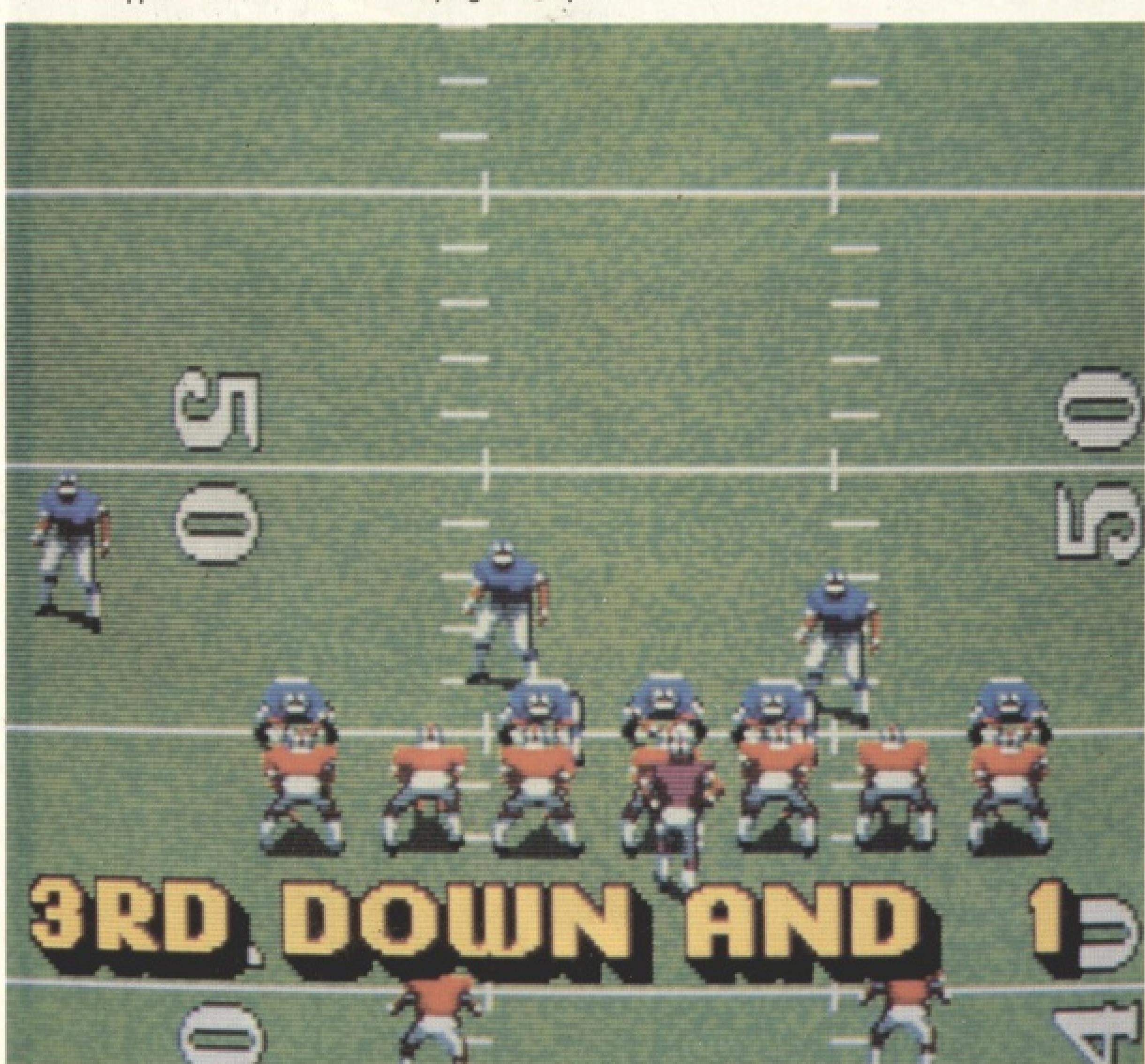


NEWS

Including the first screens from Ocean's 16-bit conversions of RoboCop, two interesting 'tributes' from Logotron, some updates, and a couple of competitions for good measure.

24 TV SPORTS FOOTBALL

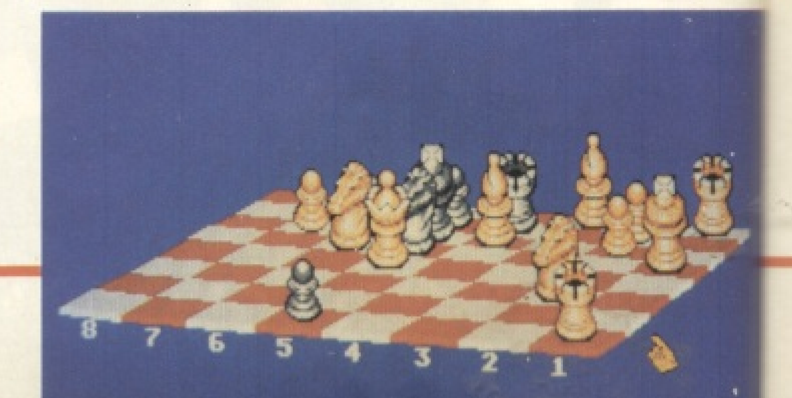
(Almost) everything you wanted to know about American Football but were afraid to ask... Cinemaware's innovative approach to their home country's greatest sport.



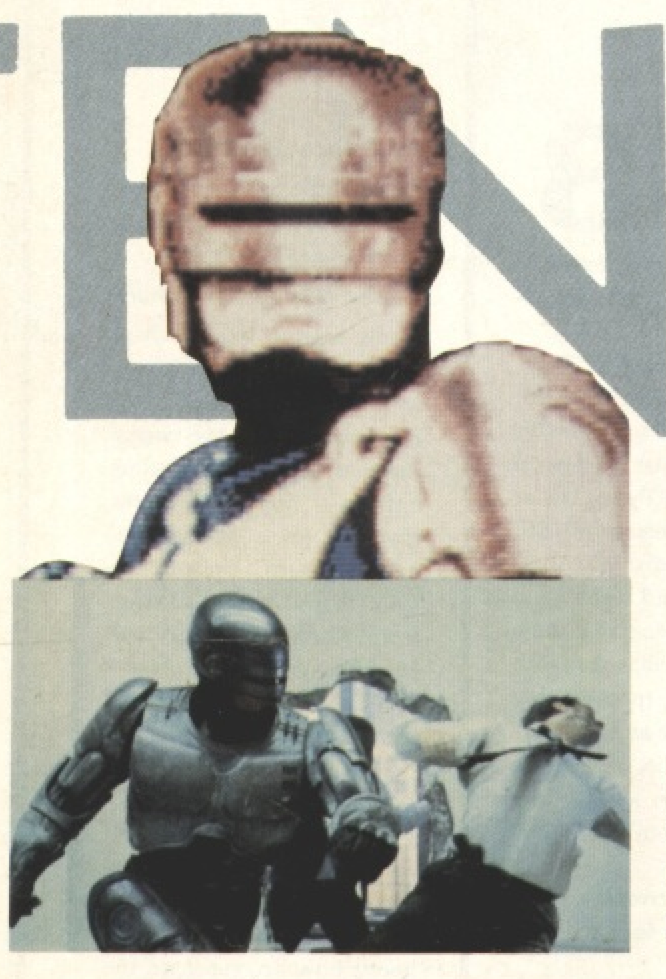
Forty-one pages of informative critical appraisal.

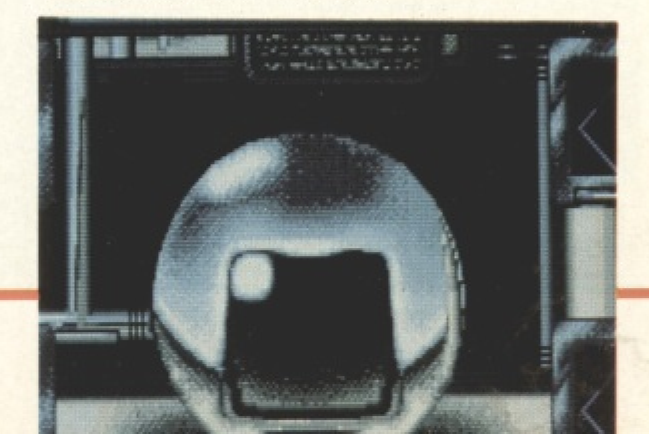
76 COLOSSUS X

Chess-t the thing for those rainy Winter knights... a little computer pawn. Sixteen of them in fact, in CDS' first 16-bit Colossus incarnations.



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BYE BYE 1988

What a year! A year of new things, good things, change, ups and downs, lefts, rights . . . and plenty of firing, both on-screen and off.

Without putting my tongue too near anyone's trousers, Mirrorsoft would be my choice for Software House Of '88 – if we had such an award, which we don't, but I thought that I'd mention it anyway. Nunkie Bob's software toe has undoubtedly had a good year, notably with the successful launch of its new label, Image Works. This included the signing of a healthy injection of talen – the Bitmap Brothers. Arguably it was their slick shoot 'em up **Xenon** made Melbourne House's year (that said, **Double Dragon** seems to be doing quite well at the top of the charts), but it was **Speedball** for Image Works that mad mine.

The signing of American software producer FTL in 1987 raised more than a few eyebrows, especially when the product appeared. Its debut, two conceptually different but equally impressive games, **Oids** and **Dungeon Master** received unanimous praise. Not bad for a team more usually associated with business packages which writes games in its 'spare time'

Cinemaware's interactive movie **Rocket Ranger** had jaws dropping all around. Creative Director Bob Jacob says "forget everything else we've done before – **Rocket Ranger** is the first in our new generation of products. This is the first of our interactive movies." And just when we thought we'd seen it all, Cinemaware turned their hands to sports simulation and knocked everything else for six with **TV Sports Football . . . TV Sports Boxing** is the next in the series.

The ST and Amiga conversions of the flight and combat simulator **Falcon** were some of the best pieces of software yet seen. And no doubt the high quality product will continue to appear in '89. **Interphase, Blasteroids, Dungeon Master II, Lords Of The Rising Sun,** a simulation from Spectrum HoloByte which supposedly puts **Falcon** in the shade, and then there's at least two to come from the Bitmaps.

Telecomsoft, or rather Firebird and Rainbird, also gave us goods to be grateful for, with David Braben's ST and Amiga incarnations of **Zarch**, the game that puts the 'class' into classic. Realtime's **Carrier Command** captivated, and next year we can look forward to its unique approach to the **Elite** formula, **Frontier**.

Argonaut's **Starglider II** hit the mark and made the top spot, but it's likely to look a little weak when compared to its forthcoming combat simulator **Hawk,** currently in production for Electronic Arts.

Manchester's finest, Ocean, picked up licences galore, and despite some weak 8-bit conversions, such as **Army Moves,** it made its mark with **Operation Wolf** and **Batman. Robo-Cop's** the one to watch for next year.

After getting off to a poor start on the 16-bit front, Activision and affiliated Electric Dreams surprised us all with coin-op conversions . . . **Super Hang-On** and **SDI.** System 3's **IK+** provided the icing. It's a pity their year had to end in mediocrity in the shape of **Afterburner** and **R-Type,** but at least 1989 should start with a bang, with the release of **ISS.** Whether or not they will rediscover their form with their conversions of Sega's **Galaxy Force** and **Altered Beast,** and the more recently acquired **Powerdrift,** remains to be seen.

Hewson did itself proud – or rather, John Philips did, with **Eliminator** and **Nebulus.** His latest project (provisionally titled **JMP4**) promises to be equally as innovative as his tower-toppling classic. Other notable releases from the smaller fish included Logotron's reworking of **Defender – StarRay** (having rewritten **Xor** for the Amiga, the boys are now working on another potentially slick blast).

Sadly, Novagen's sequel to **Mercenary – Damocles,** failed to materialise, but at least it's something to look forward to in 1989.

Amstrad once again attempted to bring the PC compatible into the home with the CGA-based Sinclair PC-200. No doubt it will be yet another machine for all the family. Just think: all those educaitonal products, all those accountancy packages, all those luvverly four-colour games . . . but will we see it in the stores this side of Christmas?

We certainly won't see Atari's recently announced addition to the console scene until later in 1989. It has the same architecture as a standard 520 ST, which is good news for software houses as ST code will be compatible, but bad news for anyone expecting a huge software base if they bought the console . . . there's no disk drive or keyboard – instead software will come on cartridges. So what's the point? Probably an attempt to establish the ST in the States, which is where it failed to make an impact.

Speedking joystick manufacturer Konix has a console in the pipeline and due for release sometime around Spring of next year, and we can expect to see Sega's 16-bit console around August. However, main rival Nintendo's 16-bit console won't appear until they feel the market's ready for it.

And then there's . . . I'd better stop there. Time is short (and life is cruel), so if you haven't already had one, here's wishing you the Merriest of Christmases and a New Year of extreme happiness.

Paul 'Nice' Boughton

There's little to say about ex-C&VG Deputy Editor Paul, as he's so nice.

Ciarán 'Clover' Brennan

Ciarán likes to work as hard as the next man – unfortunately the next man is Gary Penn, so between the two of them they've been getting nothing done recently. Favourite jokes include Kenneth Williams' "Infamy, infamy, they all have it infamy," from Carry On Cleo and Stephen Wright (The American Comic, not the irritating De-Jay) waxing lyrical about the female gender: "You can't live with 'em, you can't shoot 'em." Most played games in Ciarán's ever-growing software collection include **Nebulus** (anyone know how to get past the third tower?) and **TV Sports Football.**

Phil 'Norton' South

Unfortunately poor old Philip now whiles away his days trying to come up with dull features full of long words for certain other magazines. A recent trip to Paris nearly ended in disaster as Philip forgot to bring his address book and consequently couldn't find his way home. Luckily for us though readers, he finally made it and has spent the last couple of weeks locked in his bedroom with a pile of software, a joystick and regular supply of chips and mayonnaise. Games which currently tickle Phil's fancy include **Pacmania, Captain Blood** (well he would like it if he could understand it) and **Rocket Ranger.**

Brian 'Brian' Nesbitt

Brian disappeared for a short while this month and caused a lot of people a great deal of distress by his uncharacteristic absence. He eventually returned, sporting a five o'clock shadow and babbling something about a lost weekend in a Wimpy in Newport. Other great upsets in Brian's life have been the loss of his pet hamster, Brian, and the equally tragic loss of his much-loved 'Simon' game. Brian can currently be seen enthusing about **Colossus X, Football Director II** and **Trivial Pursuit: A New Beginning.** Finally, Brian would like to clear up a little misunderstanding that may have arisen from what was written about him in last month's issue – he's not actually 'bespectacled' as he only wears glasses for reading and playing with his computer. His brother still owns an ST.

Gary 'Sean' Penn

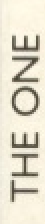
The boss appears to have gone off his rocker a touch this month, having taken out a subscription to The Plain Truth and confessing to joining the Brother Beyond fan club. This slight touch of festive fever doesn't appear to have affected his **Speeball** skills however, as the bearded wonder remains unbeaten. Software favourites include **Operation Wolf** and, of course, **Speedball.**

Gary 'Loverboy' Whitta

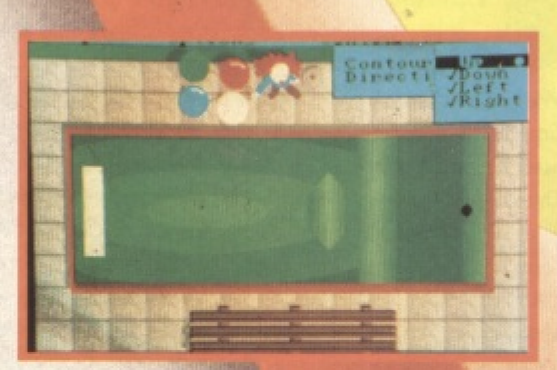
Currently seen compiling lists of desirable Christmas prezzies, Gazza has recently discovered the charms of the fairer sex. In fact, this revation has hit him so hard that he has now begun to wear after-shave (and is even considering taking up shaving). Current five raves include **Afterburner** (well someone had to like it, **ISS** and the little blonde beauty who lives at number 34.

Graham 'Jenny' Taylor

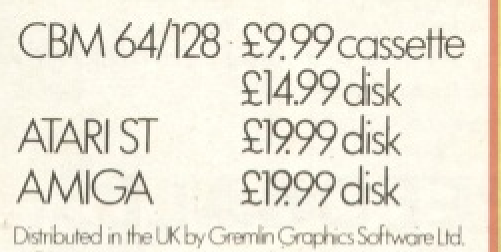
What can we say about GT that hasn't already been forgotten? Normally an ST man, Graham has just found himself in possession of an Amiga and can now be heard wandering around The One's office saying "are you finished with that then?" over and over again. Current faves are **Pac-Mania, Garfield** and anything that he doesn't have to pay for.





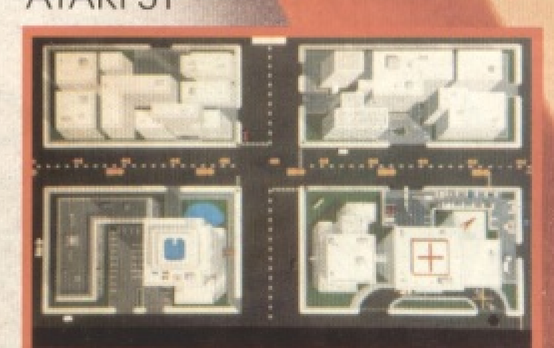


ATARI ST



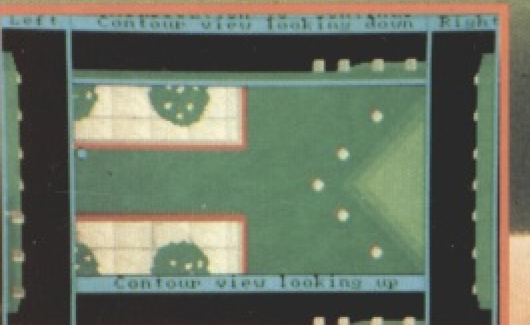


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ATARI ST

COLOURFUL COMMENT

Dear Gary,

I agree with Mr O'Brien, who complained about the black and white pages in the first issue. I appreciate that a full colour magazine is expensive to produce, but surely the extra cost is justified when you take into account the subject matter that you're dealing with. After all, the best thing about the Amiga and ST is the fabulous colourful graphics which they produce.

Surely when you charge £1.50 a month for a magazine, this should easily cover the cost of a few extra colour pages. So come on The One, how about it?

Frank Osborne, Oswestry, Shropshire

Almost, Frank. In order to make the pictures look that bit classier, we use better quality, and subsequently more expensive paper. A full colour issue would cost a bit more – just how much more is being investigated even as we scribble.

A LITTLE LIGHT RELIEF

The One,

I think your magazine is excellent and especially appreciate the length and detail of your reviews. But couldn't we have a little light relief from time to time, perhaps the odd competition or two to tax the brain or a non-software feature. Nothing too excessive, just a couple of pages here and there...

I realise ST and Amiga owners are more sophisticated than the kiddywinks who read the Smash Hits-rip-off-style mags like Your Sinclair and Sinclair User, but we're not entirely po-faced you know!

Ralph Twice, Uxbridge, Middlesex

ON A MORE SERIOUS NOTE...

Dear Sir,

I am probably one of your older readers (postitively ancient at 48!) and have so far bought all three issues. I have to say that I enjoy the colourful reviews and am not such an 'old fogey' that I don't enjoy the occasional spot of 'light relief'. But really, couldn't we have a bit more 'meat'.

As a newcomer to the world of computers attracted by the 'serious' possibilities of my ST, I would welcome articles on programming – perhaps a comparison of the different 'BASICs' which are available. A short course on Machine Code would also go down well (as a novice I find this mind-boggling).

We all like to 'let our hair down' once in a while, but please The One, take a leaf out of ST World's book (an excellent publication) and give us the serious side of computing as well as the frivolous.

D Welland, Battesbridge, Essex

Sorry D, but we certainly don't intend to delve too deeply into the realms of serious applications. After all, this is The One for 16-bit games...

MORE OF THE SAME

Sir,

Congratulations on a fine magazine. The title is a little awkward (when you thought of it you obviously never considered having to ask for the magazine in a newsagent... "The One what?" is the usual reply), but the content is top notch.

I wasn't entirely sure about the review format at first, despite promises made in the first issue, but I can see in your latest organ that, unlike British Rail, you're getting there, **Falcon** and **Batman** looked good and more importantly, were informative – more than just lengthy subjective comments made by disinterested reviewers.

I was particularly impressed by the way the **Falcon** review managed to convey the feel of the game – I'm an ardent fan of the Apple Macintosh version (incidentally, will you be covering Mac software in future issues? How about a feature?), so I was especially interested to hear about the ST and Amiga versions. Glad to see Mirrorsoft didn't spoil a brilliant simulation in the translation, and I can't wait to get my hands on the Amiga version (I play the Mac version in my lunch hours!).

But I digress. I'm curious to know whether you intend to produce all reviews in a similar manner, or were these just one-offs? I would suggest you stick with this style, such as the information on Batman (I never really read comics in my youth – I'm 37 by the way – but much to my surprise I found the article in question quite engrossing). More of the same please!

Joe Cooper, Biggleswade, Herts

*No problem, Joe, **Falcon** and **Batman** weren't one-offs – the **FOFT** review in the first issue was along similar lines. You can certainly expect to see more of the same in future issues. Mac software? Possssssibly...*

SPEEDBALL, BLOODY SPEEDBALL

Dear Sir,

What is this obsession that your staff has with **Speedball**. I appreciate that you may actually like the game, but it's a bit like having an 'in' joke among yourselves, when the game isn't even in the shops yet. I do hope that when the game does come out that it lives up to the high expectations which you have built up over the last couple of months.

Now that I've got that off my chest I'd just like to say that, being an ex C64 owner and ZZAP! 64 reader, it's good to see that computer games magazines are actually growing up with their readership, and not treating us all as if we only started playing with our computers yesterday. Keep up the good work.

Nigel Taylor, Hitchin, Herts

SPEEDBALL, BLOODY SPEEDBALL II

Dear The One Letters,

Please help me. I've become a **Speedball** addict. I live for **Speedball**, I dream **Speedball**, I can't stop playing **Speedball**. I'm becoming one. The doctor say's I've just got good taste in games. Can you help me? It's the Bitmap Bros fault...

Kenneth Jackson, Edinburgh.

RATINGS RATED

Dear The One,

Great magazine, shame I couldn't get the first issue. Do you do back issues? Why don't you have a better ratings system, like ACE do? Your ratings themselves are fine and you haven't given out any silly high marks yet, which is great for when the really mega stuff comes out, but I would like to see some more detail in the ratings.

Andy Thompson, Andover, Hants

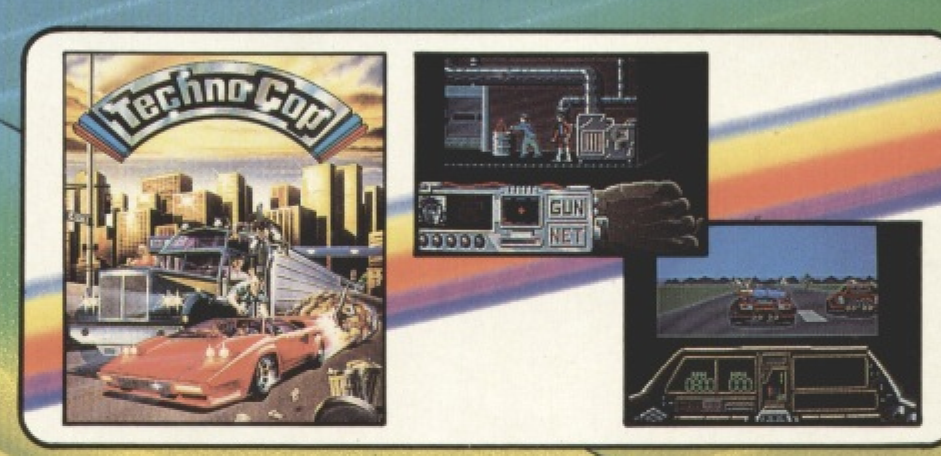
We would sell back issues – if we had any to sell!

We'd like to think life's made easier by keeping things simple – we certainly don't want to over-complicate matters with Potential Lasting Interest Prediction Drawings Depicting The Functional Relation Between Two Or Three Variables By means Of A Curve Or Surface Containing Only Those Points Whose Coordinates Satisfy The Relation. The OVERALL rating is undoubtedly the most important as it's basically used to reflect the machine specific comments. Come to think of it, are the other ratings really necessary? What do you think?

LETTERS

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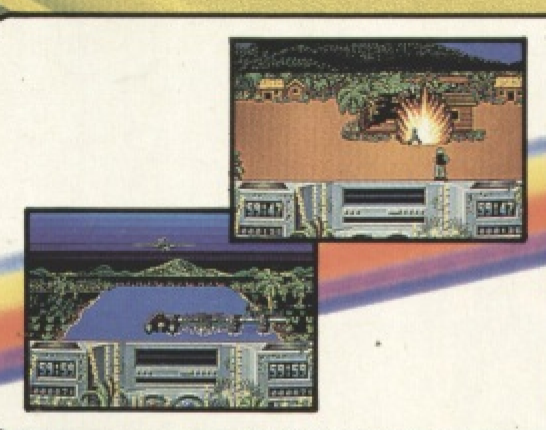
Games for ST & Amiga ... ... Ahead of their time!

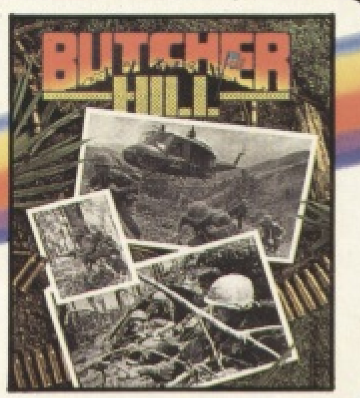


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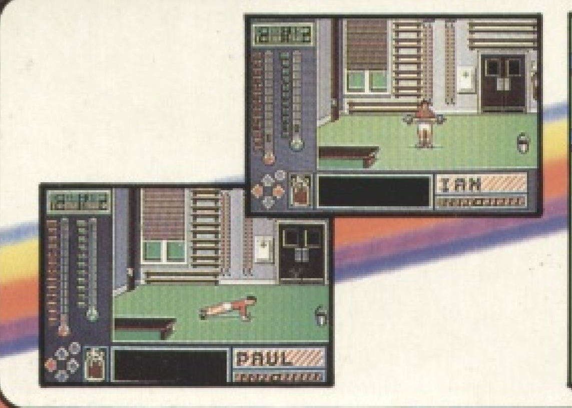
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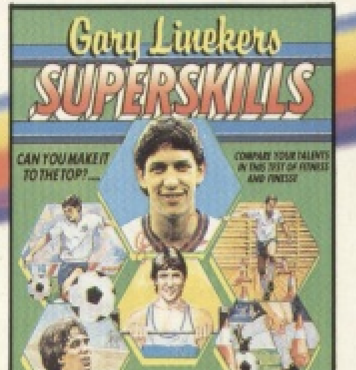


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I'D BUY THAT FOR A DOLLAR!

HALF MAN, half machine – but all cop! RoboCop exploded onto cinema screens at the beginning of the year and took the public by storm. Despite the gratuitous violence, the mixture of action-packed law enforcement and tongue in cheek humour made it one of the year's most popular films – and perfect material for a computer game.

The story, set some 15 years into the future tells of Murphy, a Detroit cop brutally tortured and left for dead by a gang of criminals led by the evil Clarence Boddiker. Murphy is pronounced Dead On Arrival at the local hospital, but scientists from the OCP corporation use what's left of his shattered body as a base to build RoboCop, a secret experiment in robotic law enforcement.

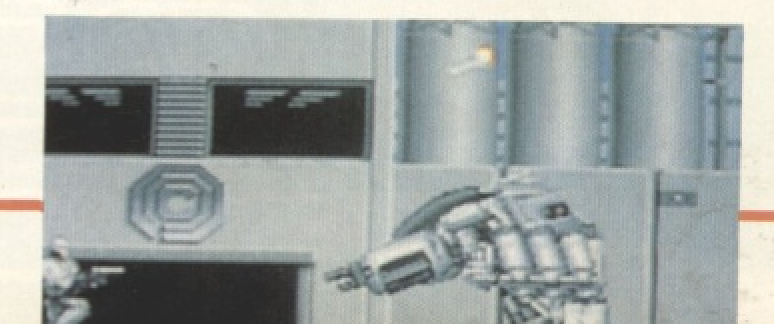
Although he starts as an almost totally unfeeling cyborg with about as much humanity as Judge Dredd (on whom the character is loosely based), RoboCop's human side eventually shines through. Flashbacks from his tragic past eventually begin to haunt the mechanised policemen, who soon realises the terrible truth and sets out to destroy those who finished his natural life.

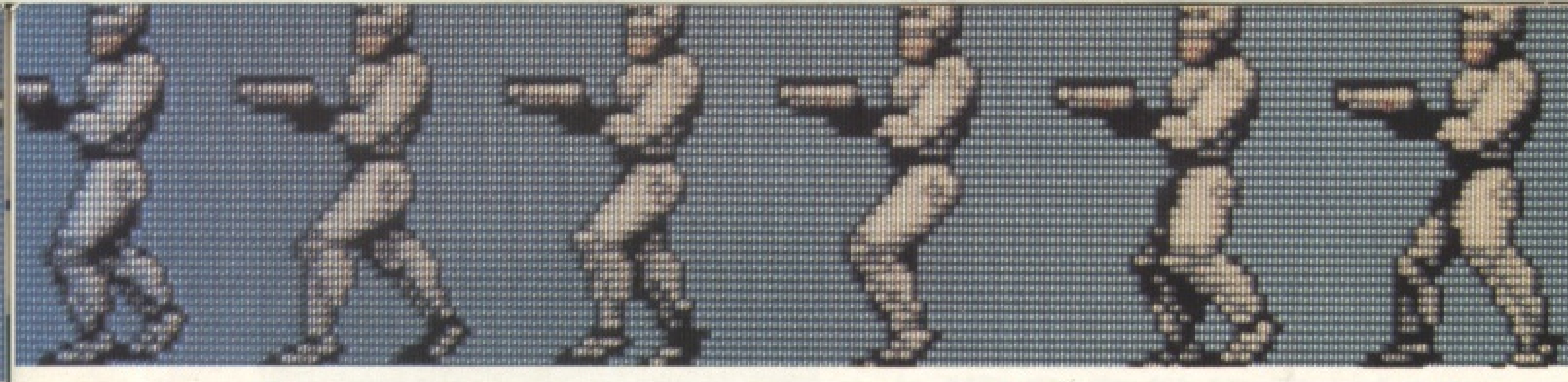
An arcade machine based on the film has already hit the streets, and like the computer game is set to cash in on the video release. The coin-op's origins however, are somewhat unusual. Ocean orginally bought the home computer conversion rights, and then sold the coin-op rights to Data East, who produced the machine on which the home versions were based.

Peter Johnson, who has previously worked on **Wizball**, **Arkanoid**, **Arkanoid: Revenge Of Doh** and **Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge** is writing the ST



RoboCop encounters the menacing Enforcement Droid (ED)-209 outside OCP's offices in Data East's coin- op.





RoboCop pumps a bad guy full of lead as he reaches for his gun, but there's trouble coming up from behind in the form of those two burly bodybuilders.

and Amiga versions after lengthy playing sessions on the coin-op. A great fan of the film (although he felt that the violence was a bit 'over the top'), Peter was given the job of conversion some eight months ago, but didn't start work until quite recently.

Although the ST and Amiga versions are loosely based on the coin-op (ie: patrol the streets of Detroit blowing away villains and closing down narcotics factories), they actually contain extra elements. The home computer versions follow the film more closely, with each of the sections adapted directly from one of the film's more memorable moments.

An example is the scene where RoboCop encounters a knifeman holding a female hostage and must waste him without hurting the girl – one of his four prime directives, 'Protect The Innocent', flashes at the bottom of the screen to remind the player to be careful when aiming. Peter hopes to include RoboCop's original method of disposing of the knifer, which is a tad ironic, as anyone who's seen the film will tell you.

Another novel feature is the 'photofit' section, where RoboCop matches the faces of known gang members to police file photos, searching through banks of noses, mouths, eyes, ears and hairstyles to build a complete face within a given time limit.

The ST version looks very impressive, and the Amiga version should be almost coin-op perfect – complete with brilliant attract sequences and sampled speech. Peter hopes that a 16-bit **RoboCop** should be patrolling the streets by Easter.

Thank you for your cooperation...



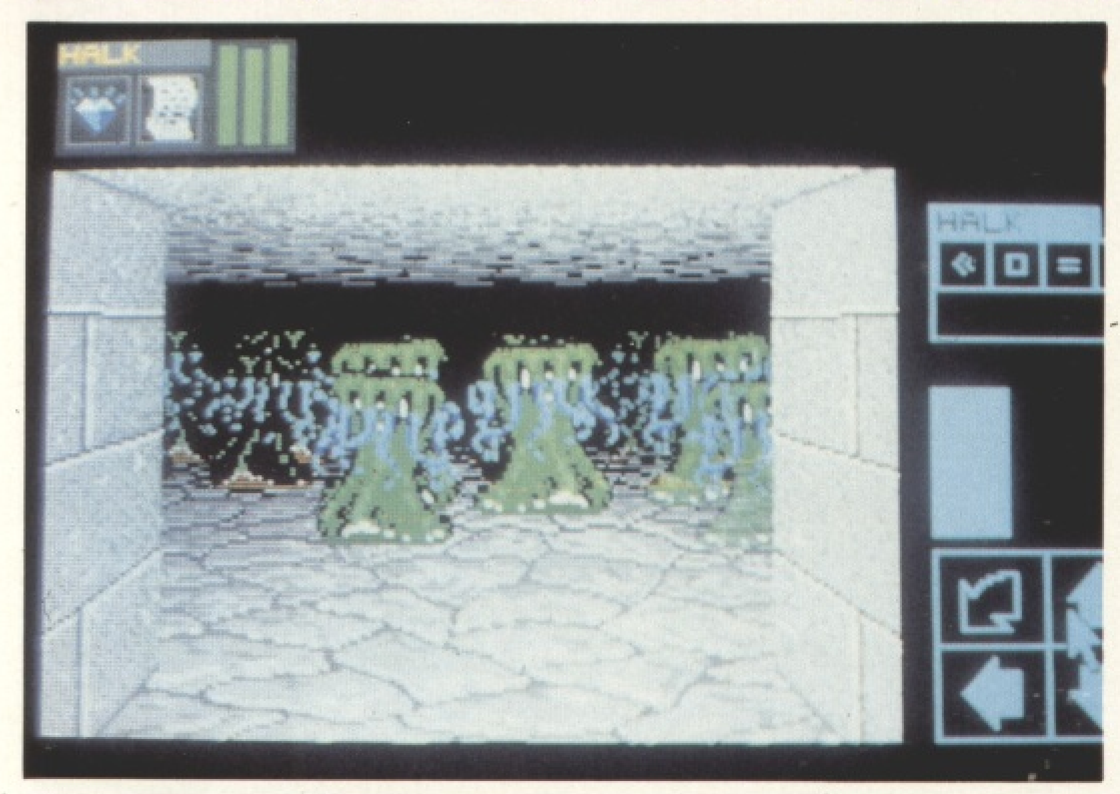
The ST ED-209 may be smaller than its arcade counterpart but it's every bit as fierce. You have 20 seconds to comply...

DELVE EVEN DEEPER

CHAOS is imminent, as Mirrorsoft sets a January release date for its sequel to **Dungeon Master**, arguably one of the biggest selling ST games of all time and winner of several computer awards, including two Tilt D'Or awards in France and an award from German magazine Happy Computer.

Blessed with the happy go lucky title, **Chaos Strikes Back**, the expansion pack is an extra five levels that can be loaded into the original program as a saved game. The pack will include new dungeons and puzzles as well as a novel character portrait editor that allows the player to graphically customise the appearance of his party.

Amiga owners won't be left out either, as the original **Dungeon Master** is due for release on their machine at around the same time as **Chaos**. FTL is currently beavering away on the official sequel to **Dungeon Master** (provisionally titled **Dungeon Master II**), which should see the light of day by Autumn at the latest.



More chaotic adventuring in the DM expansion pack.

OH DEAR ME

AFTER last month's preview of Image Works' **Blasteroids** in which we stated that programmers Teque had ported the original code from the coin-op directly into the ST and Amiga, we received a telephone call from Teque member Jim Tripp, who was quite understandably miffed.

In fact, Jim had done nothing of the sort and had been slaving away through the small hours for more than two months, programming the whole thing from scratch! Sorry Jim the mistake was a genuine one owing to crossed lines between ourselves and Mirrorsoft.

Meanwhile, the ST version is all but complete with the Amiga not far behind, and there's a review of both in the next issue.

The fruits of Jim's labour . . . Image Works' Blasteroids.





Mission Impossible? Sega's brilliant Power Drift, **set for release on ST and Amiga late next year.**

ACTIVISION CATCHES SEGA'S DRIFT

HOT ON the heels of Mediagenic's snapping up of a host of film and arcade licences, the firm has just announced the acquisition of two more coin-op titles – Sega's graphically-stunning fantasy race game **Power Drift** and **Ninja Spirit** from **R-Type** manufacturer, Irem.

Both of these were reviewed in issues Two and Three. Work has yet to begin on either conversion, as Mediagenic is currently in the process of finding suitable programming teams for both projects.



Atari ST screen shots

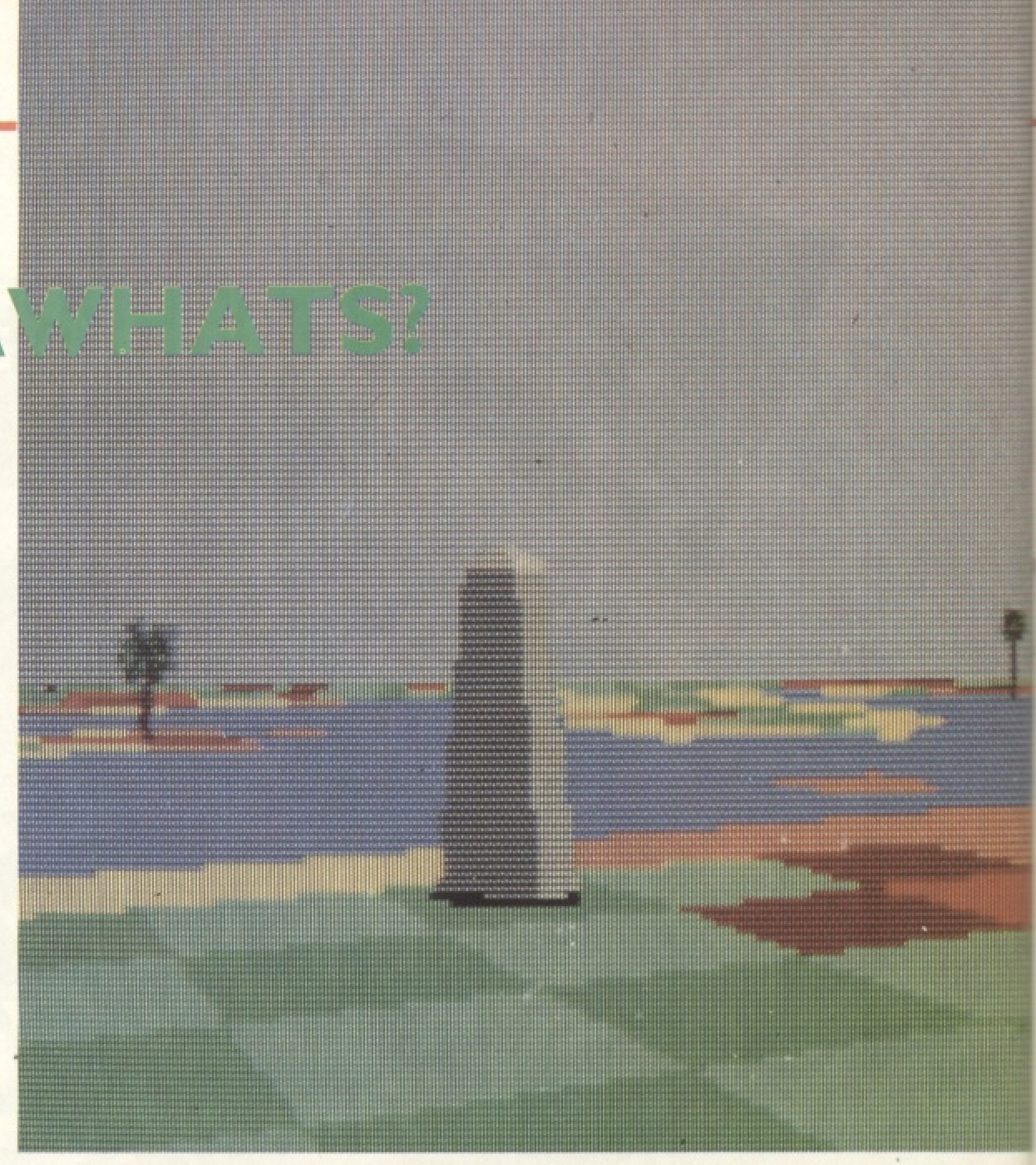
ARCHIPELAWHATS?

AS **16-BIT** games become more and more complex, they also get weirder. Take Firebird's **The Sentinel**, Rainbird's **Weird Dreams** and now Logotron's **Archipelagos**, a game every bit as strange as its title suggests.

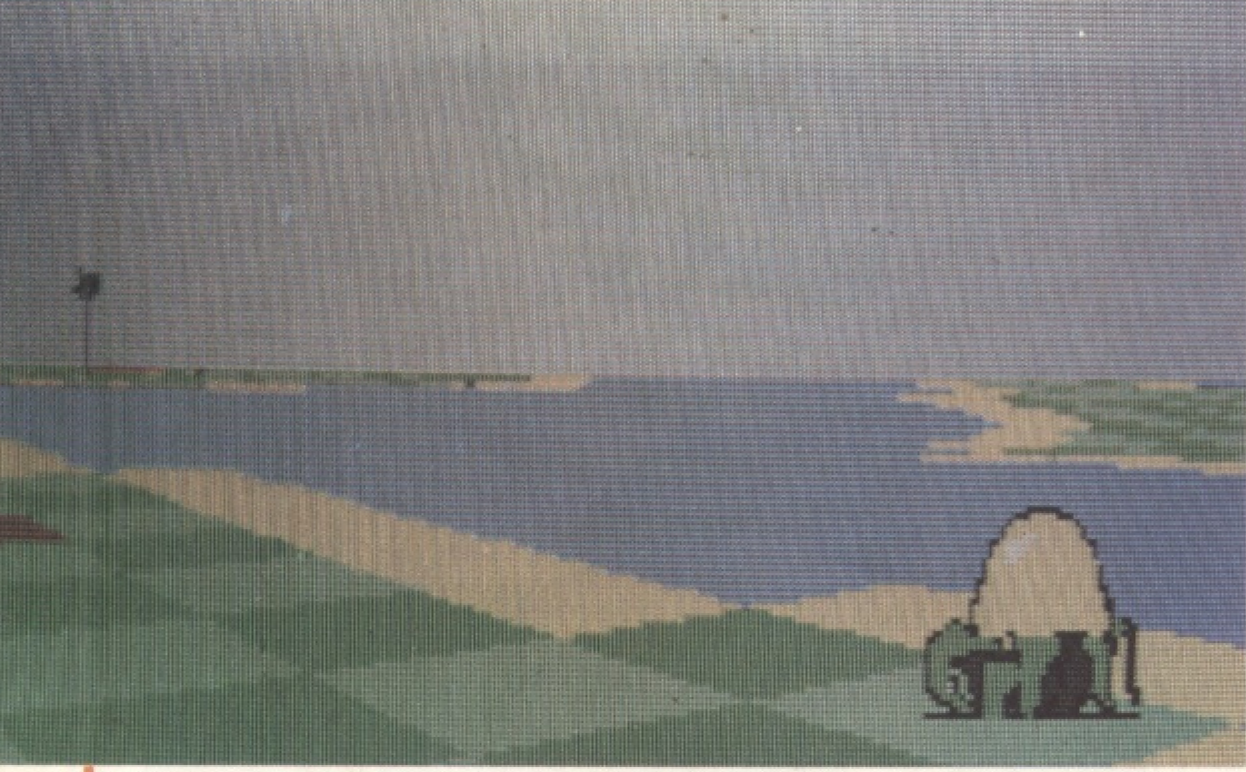
Borrowing elements from **Mercenary**, **Damocles**, **Virus** and **The Sentinel**, **Archipelagos** is a filled 3D extravaganza that sees the player patrolling a large group of islands, intent on destroying an all-powerful obelisk. As with **The Sentinel** there's plenty of heavy thinking to be done as you attempt to solve the devious puzzles set to you.

Boasting a possible 5,000 worlds to explore, **Archipelagos** is to be released on ST, Amiga and PC in the Spring. Also due from Logotron at the same time is **Star Blast**, a game that reputedly combines filled 3D graphics pioneered in so-called 'Space Operas' such as **FOFT**, **Elite** and **Starglider II** with no-holds-barred shooting action.

The responsibility for this project lies with Mr Micro, who did a reasonable job of converting **Elite** to the ST and Amiga. Promising the fastest 3D graphics ever, **Star Blast** is due out on ST and Amiga soon with a PC version in February.

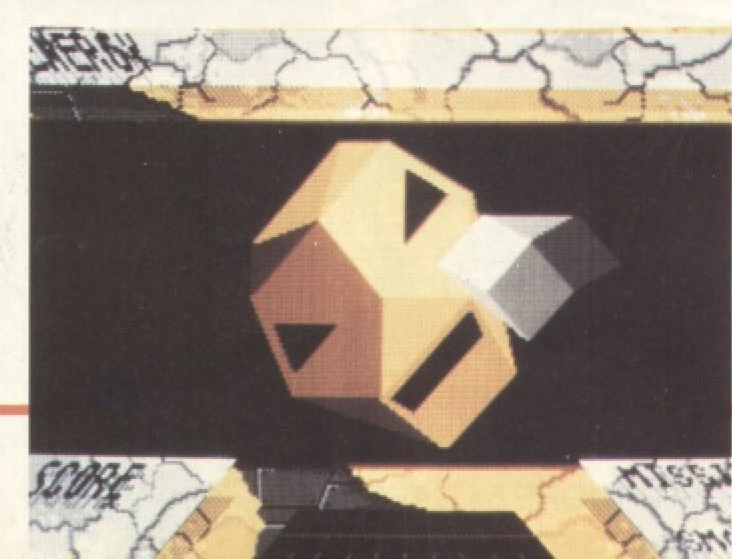


Weird, eh? Logotron have made a big departure from their previous releases StarRay and StarGoose with Archipelagos, a possible contender for the title of Strangest game of '89.



Some serene moments from Archipelagos.

Combine the 3D graphic manipulation technology that 16-bit has to offer with frenzied shoot 'em up action and you've got StarBlast from Logotron.



A

1	(NE)	SPEEDBALL	(Image Works)
2	(NE)	OUTRUN	(US Gold)
3	(1)	BATTLE CHESS	(Electronic Arts)
4=	(4)	ROCKET RANGER	(Cinemaware/Mirrorsoft)
4=	(NE)	PACMANIA	(Grandslam)
6=	(NE)	INTERNATIONAL SOCCER	(Microdeal)
6=	(RE)	STARGLIDER	(Rainbird)
8	(NE)	MEGA PACK	(Tynesoft)
9	(NE)	NEBULUS	(Hewson)
10	(8)	MENACE	(Psyclapse)

Compiled exclusively for The One by SOFTWARE CIRCUS LTD, The Plaza On Oxford Street, 120 Oxford Street, LONDON W1N 9DP. Tel: 01 436 2811.

US GOLD STORMS IN

THE LATEST coin-op conversion to generate from US Gold's deal with Capcom is **LED Storm**, a futuristic racing game that resembles a cross between **Spy Hunter** and **Death Race 2000**. The player powers a turbocharged car through the elevated aerial freeways of Sky City, racing against opponents who will stop at nothing to get him off the road.

The coin-op was first shown at the PC Show in September and has only just reached the arcades on these shores. A full review next month.

In a similar vein is Probe's conversion of Atari's **Roadblasters**, now almost fully complete. The clones, such as **Fire & Forget** and **Overlander**, have been around for a while, but you'll have to wait until next month to see just how the real thing fairs.

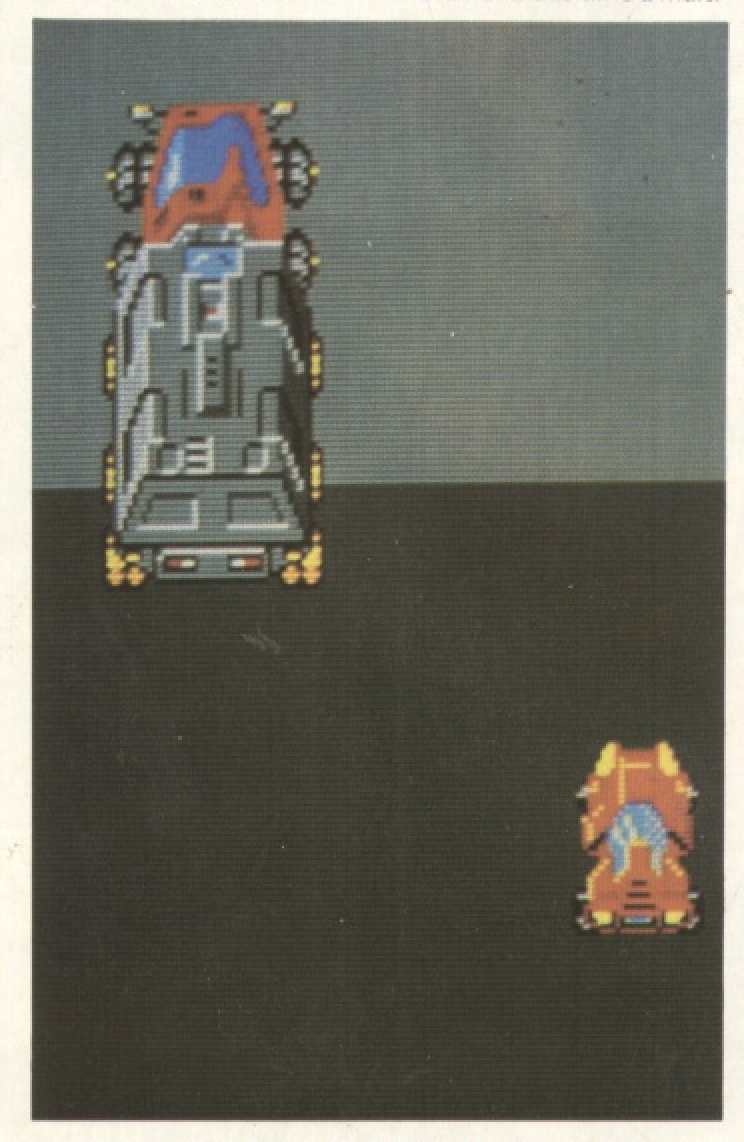
Finally there's **Tiger Road**, another Capcom affair and this time a multi-directional scrolling beat 'em up with an oriental flavour. The coin-op was a fair effort, and the conversion looks fine so far... once again, watch out for a review next month.



Capcom's oriental Coin-op comes to life on the ST with US Golds' conversion of Tiger Road. **Standby for a review next month.**



It's kill or be killed in US Gold's long-awaited conversion of Atari's brilliant race 'n' shoot 'em up Roadblasters.

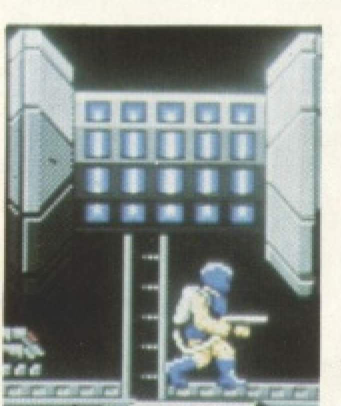


Race across the highways and byeways of a surreal aerial city in LED Storm.

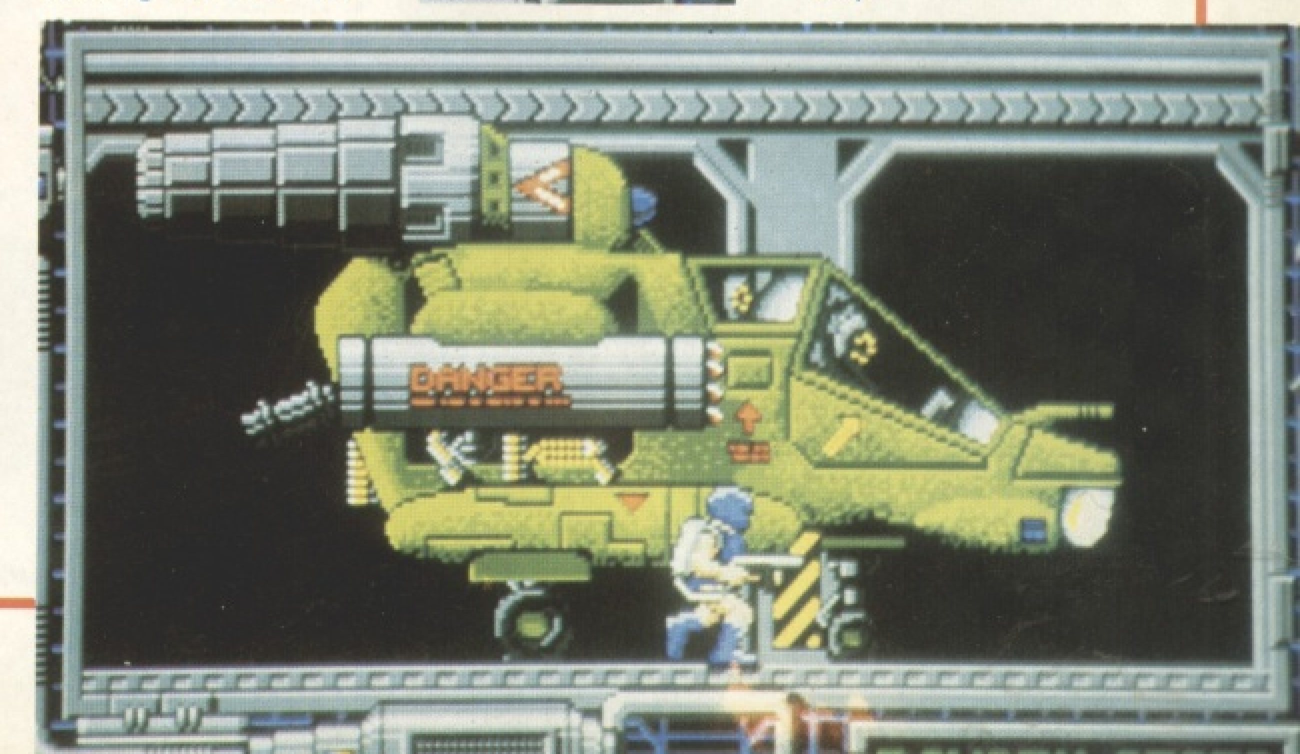
SUPER TROOPER
(BEAMS ARE GONNA BLIND ME)

A NEW label, Creation, is set to make its long-awaited 16-bit debut with **Stormtrooper**, a multi-level arcade adventure cum shoot 'em up.

Played over 16 levels and 128 screens, **Stormtrooper** has the player searching for the demented scientist Braynigget (chuckle), picking up extra weapons and powers to deal with anything that confronts him on the way.



The ST version shown here will be realeased in January, with an Amiga version following in February.







COMPETITION

If you've ever fancied a weekend of fun and games with the SAS here's your chance (well, almost). French favourites Infogrames have a Who Dares Wins Weekend planned for next year, and you could be in on the act. Copies of Hostages **and** Action Service **are also up for grabs.**

LITTLE is known about this elite force, but one thing's for sure: SAS troops are very, very HARD. Forget the shandy drinking part played by Lewis Collins in the film Who Dares Wins. If you thought he was as tough as they come, bear in mind that the SAS is often responsible for finishing off American Green Berets' training.

Formed early in World War II, the Special Air Service was originally known as L Detachment. By 1942 the unit had grown to 390 men, and after various reorganisations and further growth, an SAS Brigade was formed in 1944.

The SAS was effectively disbanded after the war, but reformed soon after to serve in Malaya where it put paid to a successful Communist uprising. Long periods were spent in deep jungle, where they pioneered techniques for parachuting into trees ... As incredible as it may sound, the SAS have been known to perform a drop from around 150 feet! The forward airspeed of a high speed plane, rather than the downward airspeed, is used to open the parachute. The parachutist then curls up into a ball, hoping his padding is in the right place, smashes into the trees, and waits for the chute to snag before abseiling to the jungle floor. Even the American Airborne Paratroopers and our very own Royal Parachute Regiment won't jump from heights this low.

Now that's HARD.

The SAS's most recent exploits include rescuing hostages from the Iranian Embassy Seige in 1980 (upon which **Hostages** was based), and the Falklands raid on Goose Green in 1982. Not to mention Gibraltar – which we're not to mention.

But how do you become so hard? Months of intense training is involved, such as learning to live on four hours sleep a day. Only when an individual can prove that he has the high qualities of mental discipline, initiative, independence and spiritual toughness required is he given the coveted beret and winged sword badge.

The two outright winners each get a place on the Infogrames Who Dares Wins Weekend, accompanying a member of The One editorial. A copy of either **Hostages** or **Action Service** is on offer for the 10 runners-up.

Simply correctly answer the questions below, not forgetting that tricky tie-breaker, and send your answers to Who Enters Wins (Maybe), The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, to arrive no later than the 28th of January 1989.



1. There's only one thing harder than the SAS, and it's ... What?
A Granite
B Diamond
C Arnold Schwarzenegger
D Titanium

2. Which hard regiment is known as "the SAS with flippers"?
A The SSS
B The SBS
C The SOS
D The SUS

3 And what does it stand for?

TIE BREAKER
How many members of the SAS does it take to change a light bulb, and why?

COMPETITION RULES (OK)
The SAS, employees of EMAP, Infogrames, associated companies and their relatives are not eligible for entry.
No correspondence will be entered into.
The editor's decision is final.

NAME

AGE

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

Just in case I'm a runner-up, I would like ...

☐ ACTION SERVICE

☐ HOSTAGES

For my ...

☐ ST

☐ AMIGA

☐ PC

Here are my answers ...

1.

2.

3.

TIE BREAKER

UBI SOFT SUCKERED

FANGS are getting out of hand in French software house UbiSoft's forthcoming arcade adventure, **Night Hunter.** Dressed to kill with a white face and long black cape, the player assumes the role of a blood-sucking anti-hero, searching the world for a number of lost holy medallions.

The vampire's interest in the jewellery stems more from its influence on the world's evil-doers. The medallions' magical powers have kept evil at bay for centuries, so the vampire has to destroy them if his play for world domination is to succeed.



The medallions are strewn across 30 levels of 20 screens each. Parchments and keys have also to be collected along the way, as these provide the only means of travelling from level to level.

The vampire patrols the 600 screens in any of three guises. In normal 'vampire' mode, the caped crusader walks from screen to screen sucking the blood of his unfortunate victims, as a 'werewolf' he travels in much the same way, but devours his victims completely, while it is occasionally necessary to transform into a 'bat' to reach otherwise inaccessible places.

ST owners will be able to begin their stint as one of the half-dead in mid January, while Amiga and PC owners won't have to start avoiding crucifixes until March at the earliest. Prices for all three formats have yet to be confirmed, but the standard UbiSoft price point of £24.99 will probably apply.



DELAY IN FREE TRADE

DESPITE being reviewed in the first issue, Gremlin's space exploration 'compendium' – **Federation Of Free Traders** – still hasn't appeared.

The reason being, according to author Paul Blythe, "endless problems. I added some features and as a result some bugs appeared. When I ironed them out, more appeared, and so on. But I think I'm on top of it now."

So when can we expect to see finished versions? "I'm tying up loose ends on the ST version now, so we're going for a January release. The Amiga version should appear a couple of weeks later – complete with a brilliant Heavy Metal soundtrack." Our breath is bated.

FOFT: out January.




Blythe: on top of it now and tying up loose ends.



CASCADE SHOWERS GAMES

WHILE most companies find it difficult to fit one complete ST game on one disk, Cascade plans to cram a hunky 15 titles onto its forthcoming compilation, imaginatively titled **Disk 15.**

The company was previously responsible for an 8-bit compilation **Cassette 50,** and PR manager Liz Sandey sees the 16-bit product as a logical progression. "The disk will be a real mixed bag," she said, "including board games, shoot 'em ups and something with a little more strategy."

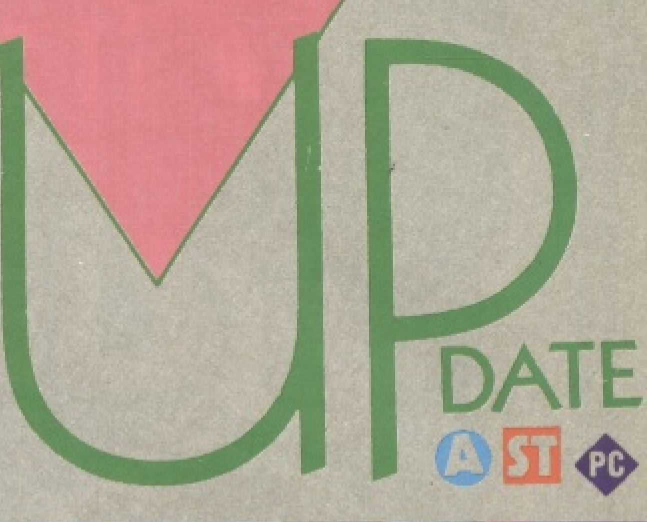
Retailing at £19.95, the disk will contain titles such as **Backgammon, Asteroid Blaster** and **City Bomber.** Amiga and IBM versions are also planned, and should follow in the next couple of months.

In addition to the compilation disk, cascade has also tied up a licensing deal with the Royal Air Force which, the company claims, is set to produce the ultimate flight simulator. RAF personnel have contributed the technical expertise, and in return part of the royalties will go to its benevolent fund.



1	(NE)	SPEEDBALL (Image Works)
2	(NE)	LOMBARD RAC RALLY (Mandarin)
3=	(NE)	POWERDROME (Electronic Arts)
3=	(NE)	HOSTAGES (Infogrames)
5	(2)	ELITE (Firebird)
6	(NE)	SDI (Activision)
7	(NE)	R-TYPE (Electric Dreams)
8	(5)	MICKEY MOUSE (Gremlin)
9	(NE)	NEBULUS (Hewson)
10	(NE)	PUFFY'S SAGA (UbiSoft)

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INTERNATIONAL KARATE +

Activision/System 3

Issue One, pg 32

A IK+ plays exactly the same as its ST counterpart, although as expected it's actually slightly faster with the Turbo mode being so fast it's almost impossible to keep up with. Sound is condiderably meatier, and all the yelps and cracks and thuds are in stereo (the explosions in the bomb bonus round are particularly impressive). The best combat game to date, no Amiga owner should be without it.

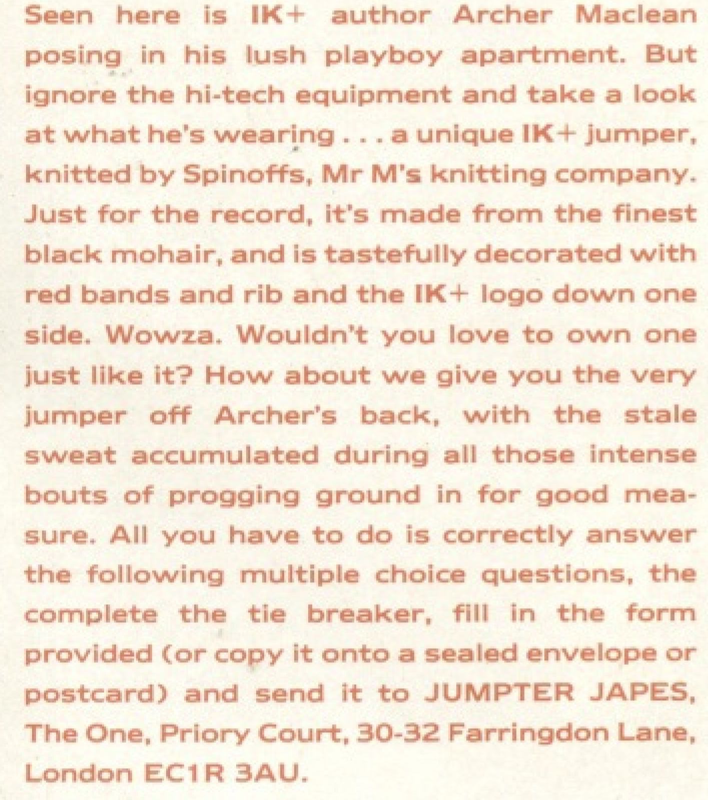
PRICE	£24.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	82%
SOUND	94%
PLAYABILITY	90%
VALUE	83%

OVERALL 88%

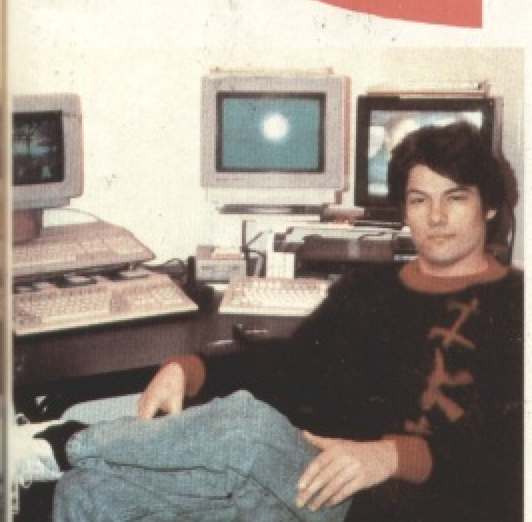


COMPETITION





Seen here is IK+ author Archer Maclean posing in his lush playboy apartment. But ignore the hi-tech equipment and take a look at what he's wearing . . . a unique IK+ jumper, knitted by Spinoffs, Mr M's knitting company. Just for the record, it's made from the finest black mohair, and is tastefully decorated with red bands and rib and the IK+ logo down one side. Wowza. Wouldn't you love to own one just like it? How about we give you the very jumper off Archer's back, with the stale sweat accumulated during all those intense bouts of progging ground in for good measure. All you have to do is correctly answer the following multiple choice questions, the complete the tie breaker, fill in the form provided (or copy it onto a sealed envelope or postcard) and send it to JUMPTER JAPES, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.



1. Who played the part of the Karte Kid in the film of the same name?

2. Name Archer Maclean's two previous releases?

3. Which famous personality is or was noted for his or her jumpers?

A Harvey 'Jumpers' Smith
B Smanatha 'Jumpers' Fox
C Frank 'Jumpers' Bough

TIE BREAKER

Create the ultimate karate and jumper joke. The funniest (providing the answers to the above questions are correct) receives the jumper. The editor's decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into.

Answers . . .

1.

2.

3.

TIE BREAKER

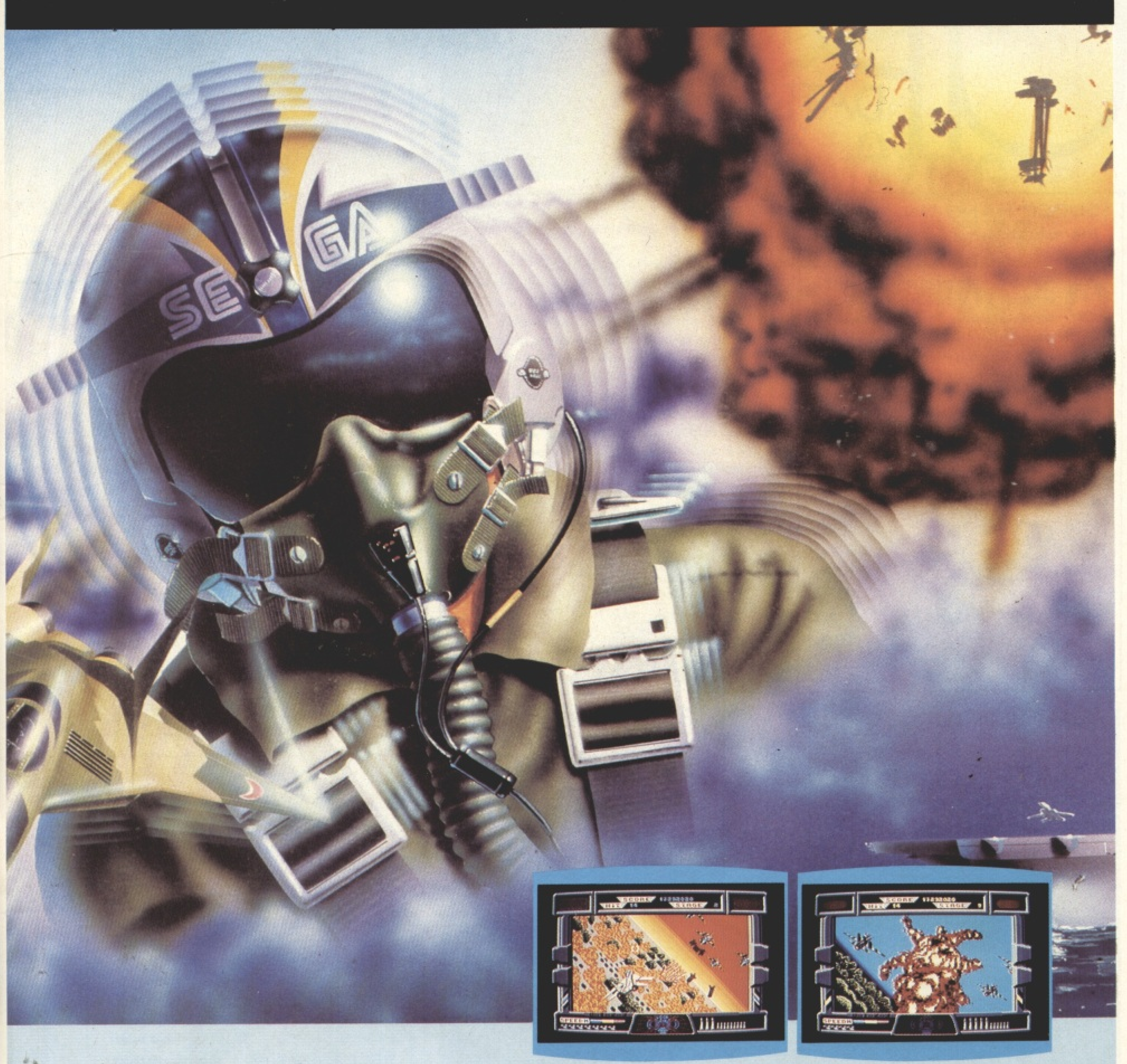
NAME...

ADDRESS..

....

POSTCODE...

RATTLE. ROLL IT...



Amiga screen shots shown

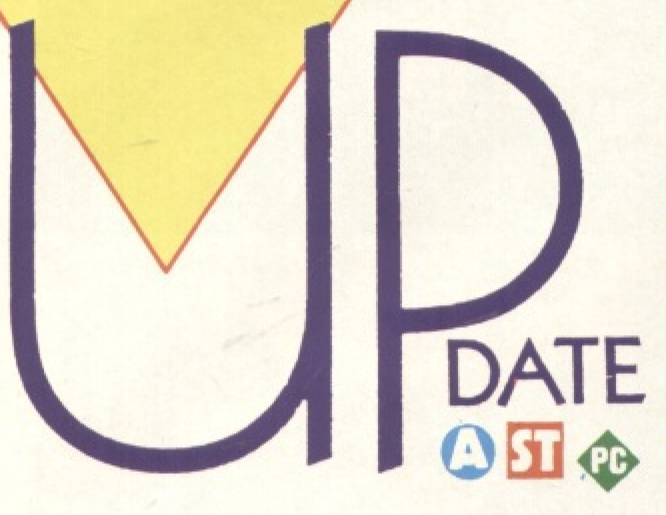
ST screen shots shown

SENSATION OF THE YEAR'

AFTERBURNER – You've played the arcade smash – now experience the white-knuckled realism of a supersonic dogfight at home! Using your heat-seeking missiles and laser anti-aircraft fire, can you be top gun against a seething supersonic swarm?

Experience brain-numbing G-forces; bones rattling with the body-jarring pitch and yaw ... **scan** with your radar, lock on your target and FIRE!

Amstrad cassette (£9.99) and disk (£14.99), Atari ST (£24.99), and MSX (£9.99).





1	(1)	FLIGHT SIMULATOR (Sublogic)
2	(5)	TEST DRIVE (Electronic Arts)
3	(NE)	KINGS QUEST TRIPLE PACK (Siera/Activision)
4	(NE)	BIG BANG (Zortech)
5	(NE)	4 X 4 OFF-ROAD RACING (Epyx/US Gold)
6=	(2)	PSION CHESS (Psion)
6=	(RE)	BALANCE OF POWER (Mindscape/Mirrorsoft)
8	(NE)	FALCON AT (Spectrum HoloByte/Mirrorsoft)
9	(6)	CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER (Electronic Arts)
10	(10)	WORLD TOUR GOLF (Electronic Arts)

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SUPER HANG-ON
Electric Dreams
Issue One, pg 65

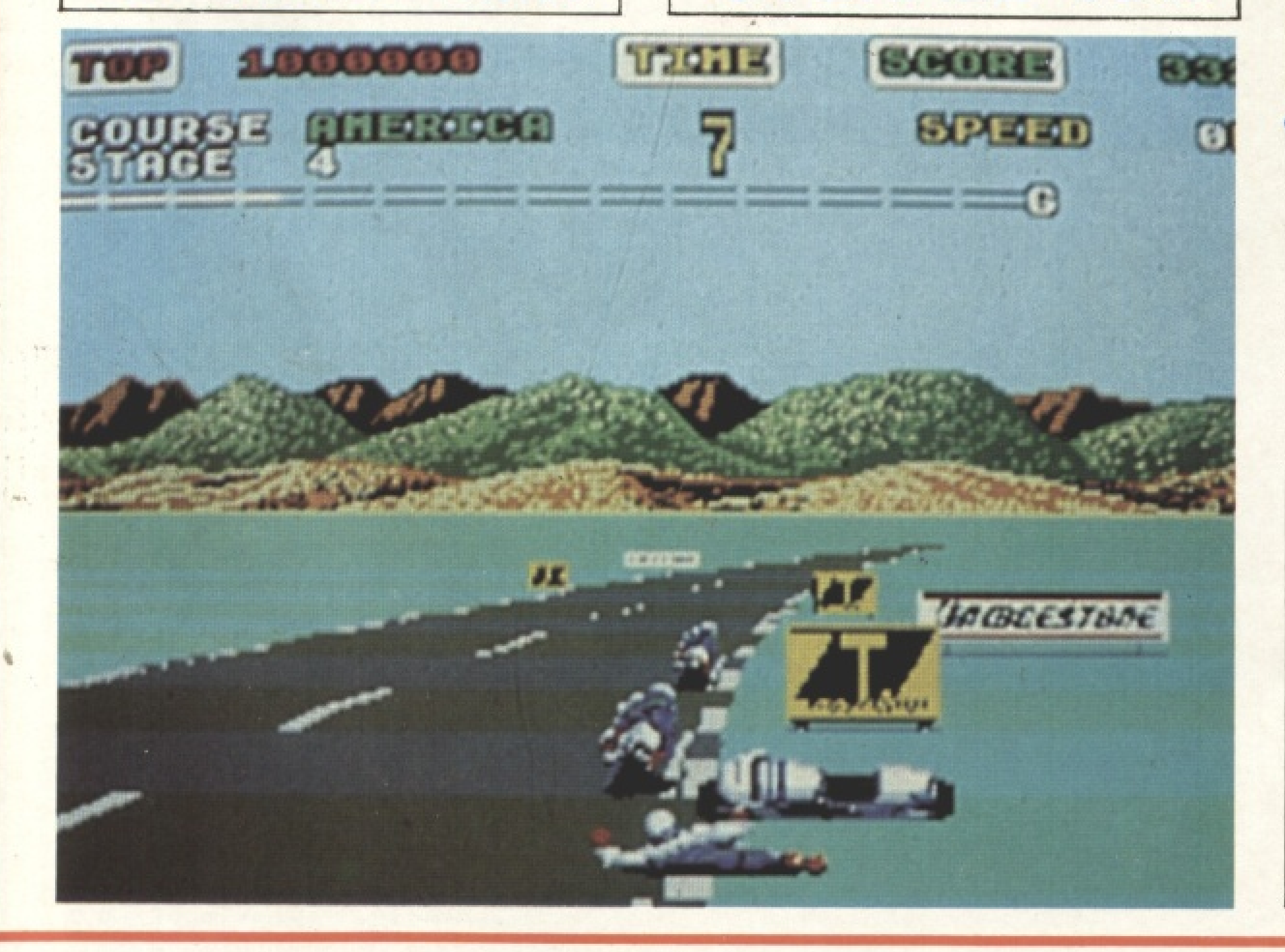
A A huge improvement over the original ST incarnation, with the screen update and overall speed of the game approaching coin-op quality. The ST's tunes have been beefed up and put in stereo, and the engine roars are terrific. It leaves the newly-released Amiga version of Out Run (and almost every other race game) way back on the starting grid in terms of speed and enjoyment value and warrants every Amiga owner's attention.

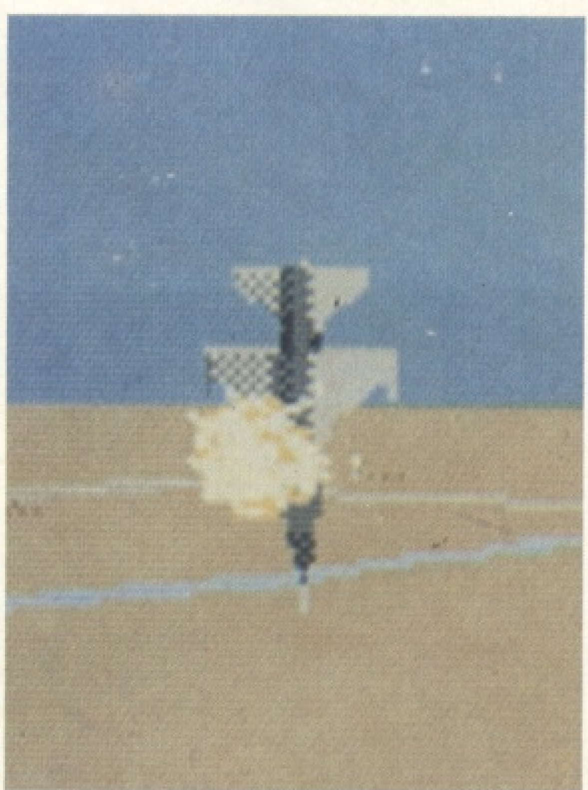
PRICE	£24.99
RELEASE DATE	January
GRAPHICS	86%
SOUND	77%
PLAYABILITY	85%
VALUE	76%
OVERALL	**85%**

ELITE
Firebird
Issue Two, pg 65

A Elite isn't immediately distinguishable from the ST version, although (unsurprisingly) the sound is enhanced, with a much improved version of the Blue Danube waltz that can now be played during the game as well as on the title screen. It is slightly faster but not considerably so. Still a classic among classics, Amiga owners shouldn't hesitate to buy, but there's still the feeling that better use could have been made of the machine's facilities.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	80%
SOUND	53%
PLAYABILITY	84%
VALUE	88%
OVERALL	**85%**





FALCON
Mirrosoft/Spectrum Holobyte
Issue Three, pg 18

A Amiga Falcon is every bit as impressive as its ST counterpart, if not more so. The sampled speech and sound effects have been beefed up considerably, along with minor refinements to the colour palette and souped up game speed. An essential addition to all Amiga game player's collection.

PRICE	£29.99
RELEASE DATE	January
GRAPHICS	92%
SOUND	92%
PLAYABILITY	90%
VALUE	89%
OVERALL	**93%**



GET SAVAGE.

IT'S AMAZING WHAT A REAL COMPUTER GAME CAN DO.



Amstrad screen shots

Spectrum cassette £8.99
Commodore 64 cassette £9.99, disc £12.99
Amstrad cassette £8.99, disc £14.99



For mail order please send your order and remittance (cheques payable to British Telecom plc or direct debit from Access/Visa card by stating card number and expiry date) to: The Marketing Department, Telecomsoft, First Floor, 64-76 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1PS.



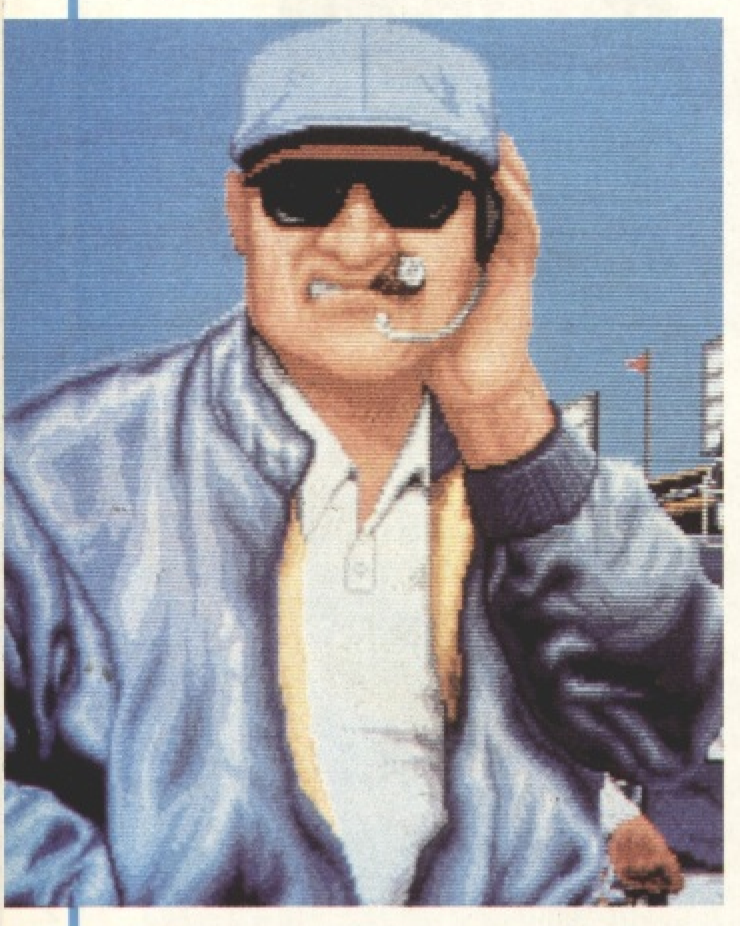
Telecomsoft, First Floor, 64-76 New Oxford St, London WC1A 1PS.

A LEGEND IN GAMES SOFTWARE

TV Sports

▲ **A**ttempts at goal are an important part of any American Football game, with the final result often depending on field goals or even the extra point which is kicked after a Touchdown. The CWFL's interpretation of this vital element is probably the game's most stunning graphic sequence, with massive characters moving fluidly, and the outcome depending entirely on the player's skill.

▼ **C**ould this be you? A football coach has to be tough enough to handle 45 BIG butch men. This guy looks as though he'll have few problems in this department.

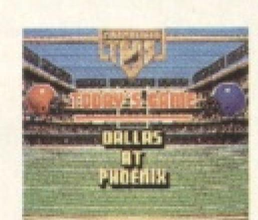


ROSTER

TEAM: CHICAGO ABV. CHI. OWNER: COMP.

POS	RK	NAME	S	S	H	A	TOTAL
QB	9	JACK MONROE	6	4	3	3	16
LHB	3	WINSTON TAYLOR	7	5	5	5	22
RHB	5	SCOOTER MCVEA	6	3	6	5	20
FB	10	TANK MALONEY	1	5	3	6	15
LWR	11	WALLY GILL	4	3	4	3	14
RWR	14	RONN STARR	3	3	3	2	11
LILB	2	WILLY MONCRIEF	7	6	3	7	23
RILB	4	MARK SYMINGTON	7	4	4	6	21
LOLB	18	OTTO WALTON	2	2	2	1	7
ROLB	17	DAN DIEGO	4	2	1	1	8
LC	7	RICHARD MARKSON	7	2	4	5	18
RC	8	DWAYNE POMEROY	6	4	1	6	17
LS	13	NICK FENTON	3	3	3	3	12
RS	16	TED RINGER	4	2	2	1	9
PUNTER	12	HARRY PACHECO	3	3	4	3	13
KICKER	15	BOB THOMPSON	3	3	2	2	10
OFF LN	6	SAVE CHANGES		CANCEL			19
DEF LN	1						24

▲ **A**t the beginning of the season, your team can be edited by allocating a number of talent points among the squad. The total talent points are divided between the players on a diminishing skill basis – the top player gets 24, while the next down gets 23 and so on. Individual player's points are then divided into four sections: Speed, Strength, Hands and Agility. These divisions mean different things for each player, depending on his position; a Quarterback's Strength determines his ability to run with the ball, while the same rating affects a Linebacker's ability to tackle the ball carrier. Incidentally, both team and player's names can also be edited at this stage – ever fancy yourself as a Quarterback?



American Sundays were once devoted to worship, religious education and family life. Nowadays however, the same day is synonymous with Offensive Tackles, Quarterbacks and Seasonal Turnover Statistics – Football has become the new American religion.

It may seem to a European observer that this has always been the case, but in fact American Football was an almost exclusively college sport until the first national broadcast of a professional game in 1956. Since then the sport has blossomed, with the only remaining championship of any note, the NFL, forcing even Baseball and Basketball into the shade.

Channel 4's extensive coverage has gone a long way to importing this popularity across the Atlantic, with an original once-off show expanding to the current three times a week format which attracts up to 3½ million viewers. The extent to which the game has taken off can be measured by the staggering 6 million viewers that tuned in to last year's Superbowl broadcast – despite its late night slot.

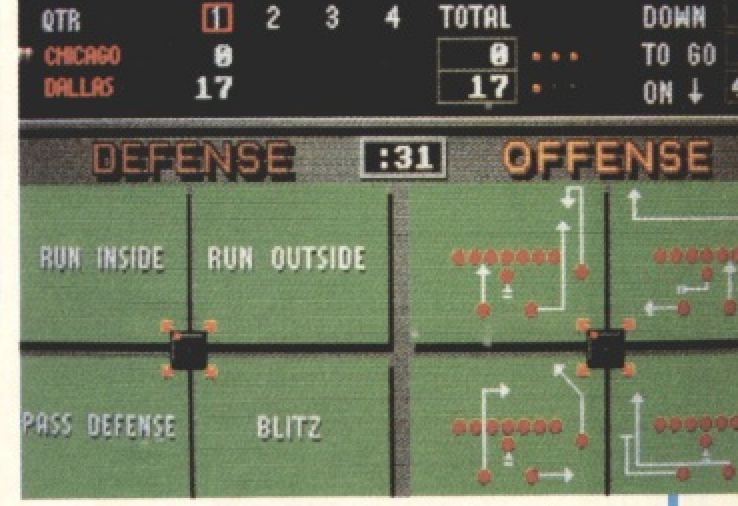
It's this strong bond between football and television that has prompted Cinemaware's first sports simulation,

Football

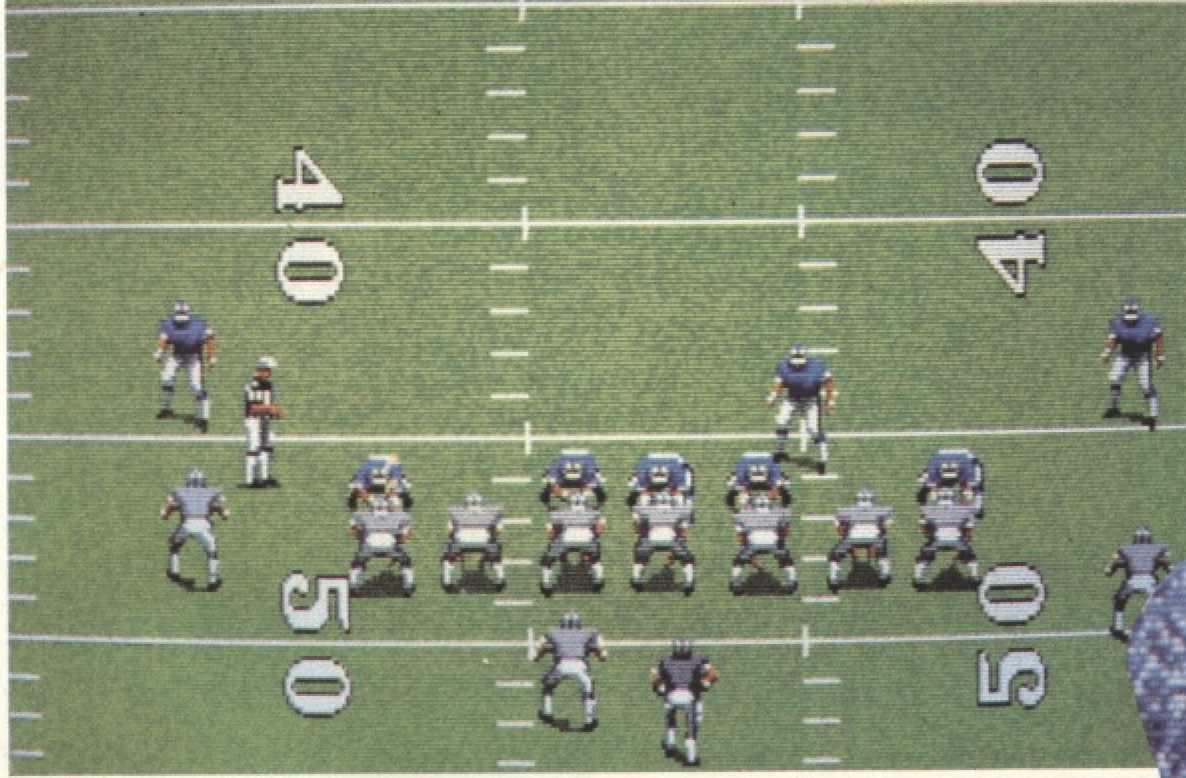




Giants do it, Cowboys do it . . . even Bears do it. (But not in the woods!) Now Amiga owners can do it too, all thanks to Cinemaware's first sports simulation. Ciaran 'Dishwasher' Brennan straps on his pads and rushes for a first down.



The Quarterback determines each move's direction by 'calling the play' – telling the rest of the team where to go. TV Sports Football's ingenious play-calling screen accurately captures this vital element, for although both players' plays are displayed simultaneously, neither player actually knows what the other is up to as the chosen play is not highlighted. The four basic plays are doubled by pressing the fire button when making the selection, reversing the existing moves by flipping them from right to left.



Break any of the 1,800 rules from the 210 page rulebook and the referee rushes onto the field to 'throw a flag on the play'. At this point play stops and the ref's decision is displayed – penalities range from moving either team forward or back a set number of yards to awarding another first down.

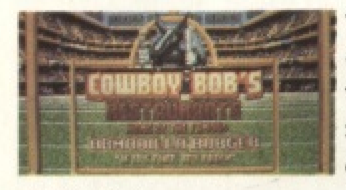


Cinemaware's 'in-jokes' abound during breaks in play. Could that be Rocket Ranger flashing past the stadium?

which combines a close approximation of the game itself with a glossy caricature of some grossly over the top American TV presentation.

The problem is that to an initial observer, **TV Sports Football** can be a mighty confusing game. A barrage of statistics and seemingly unrelated running and passing hides what is actually a very straightforward game. The object is quite simply for one team to carry the oval ball along the 100 yard pitch into its opponent's 'endzone' – unlike rugby, the ball doesn't even have to touch the ground, it simply has





to cross an imaginary barrier that rises horizontaly from the opposition's base line.

This move is known as a Touchdown and earns its team six points. A Field Goal (kicking the ball between the posts from a dead ball situation) earns three points, a Safety (stopping your opponent with the ball in his own end zone) earns two points, while a single point is earned by kicking the ball between the posts after a Touchdown (in similar fashion to a rugby conversion).

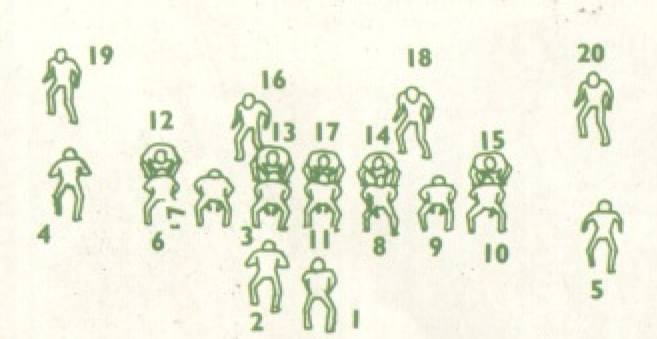
The ball is moved in a number of steps, known as downs. The team in possession has a limit of four downs to move the ball a minimum of 10 yards. For example, if the team moves the ball forward three yards in its first attempt, the next play is called 'second and seven' – second down with seven yards to go.

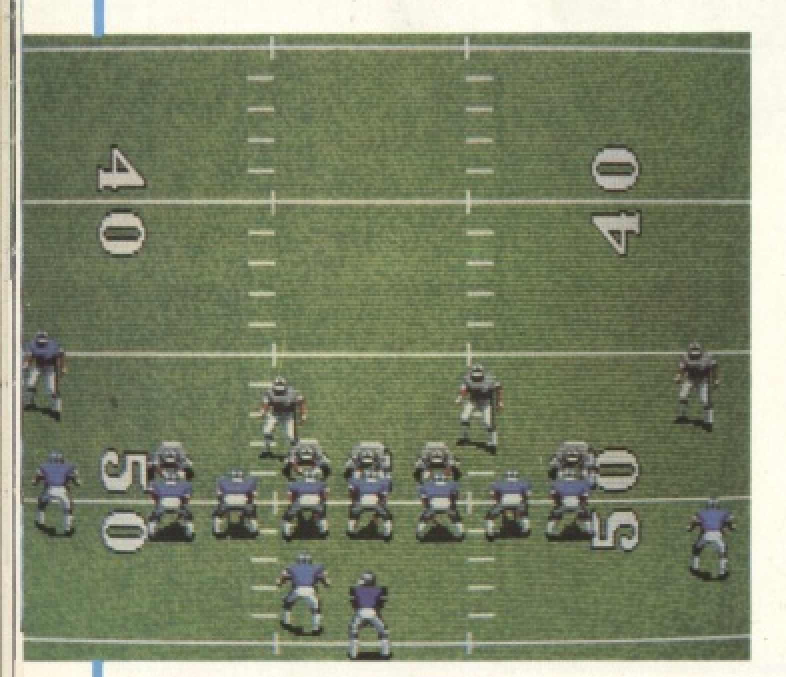
There are two ways to move the ball forward, either by running (rushing) or passing. The play is decided by the 'Quarterback' who is essentially the attacking General, while the Defensive General (usually a 'Linebacker') has to guess what the Offense is up to and arrange his players to counteract it.

The position where the ball comes to rest is known as the Line Of Scrimmage. During any play, once the ball has passed this line it can no longer be passed forward. Each play comes to end when the ball (or the player carrying it) hits the ground or goes 'into touch'. Should the team in possession fail to make the 10 yards, or should a pass be intercepted or a dropped ball recovered by the Defense, the possession changes and play starts again from where the ball came to rest.



Another play ends, but did the receiver make it for another first down? The red 'down' marker is just about visible under the two flattened players, but only the referee can decide if those vital 10 yards have been gained.





OFFENSE

1. QUARTERBACK
The General of any football team. He calls the plays, runs, throws and makes all tactical decisions. He must be strong enough to launch the ball almost the entire length of the pitch and to survive crushing tackles, yet still nimble and agile enough to run at great speed if the situation requires it.

2. FULLBACK
Normally a strong runner, he's used to charge for short yardage and to protect the Quarterback.

3. HALFBACK
A good all-rounder, he runs with the ball, receives catches and again protects the Quarterback.

4-5. WIDE RECEIVERS
Usually an Olympic-class sprinter, the Wide Receiver is used to run great distances to receive long passes.

6. TIGHT END
Big but versatile, the Tight End is mainly employed to protect the Quarterback but he can also rush with the ball and occasionally receive short range catches.

7-10. TACKLES AND GUARDS
Depending on the play, these four players are used to either open holes in the defensive line or make more passing time for the Quarterback by holding the defence off.

11. CENTRE
As his title would suggest, the Centre controls the middle of the offensive line and passes the ball back to the Quarterback. This done, he immediately becomes another tackle.

DEFENSE

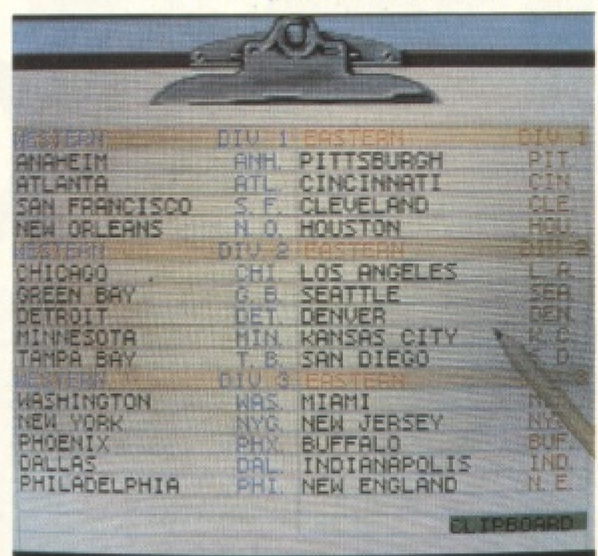
12-15. ENDS AND TACKLES
This is the Defensive powerhouse, designed to break the Offensive guard line.

16-18. LINEBACKERS
The second line of Defense, the Linebackers are used to stop running plays, intercept short passes and hassle the Quarterback. The Defense is usually controlled by one of the Linebackers.

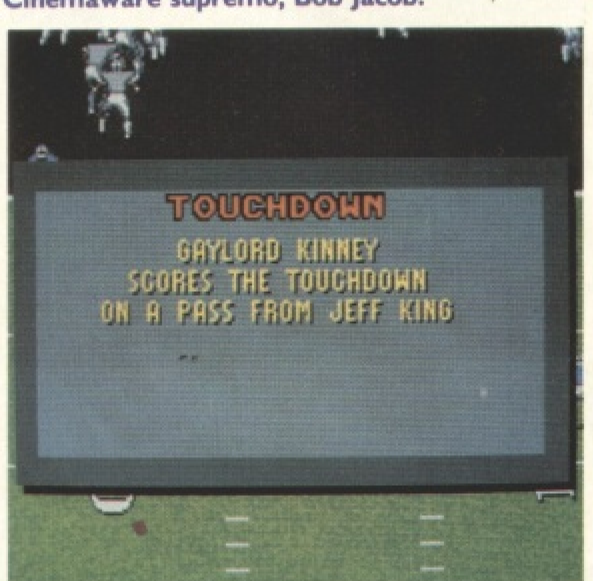
19-20. CORNERBACKS AND SAFETIES
Positioned quite far back from the line of scrimmage (the Safeties are so far back that they're actually out of this picture), this line of Defense is used to intercept long passes and tackle any runners who may have made it through the Linebackers.



Famous faces appear in the crowd. The Three Stooges are easy enough to pick out, but top marks to whoever can spot Cinemaware supremo, Bob Jacob.



The 'Clipboard' allows you to study the schedules of forthcoming games, and to examine the opposition's statistics. A unique feature allows every single team to be human controlled so that up to 28 people can take part in a real-life league! Get the Buds in, boys...

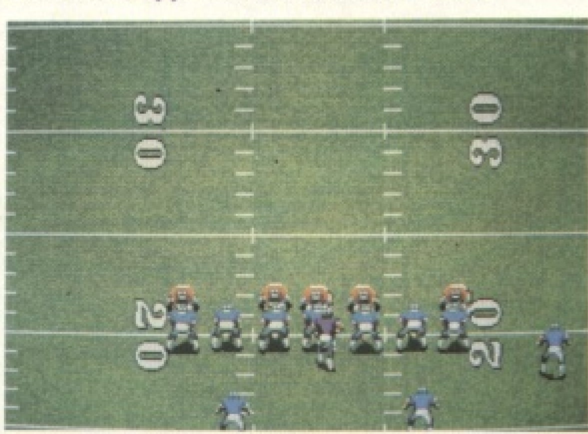


In keeping with the game's televised style, statistics and game information are flashed up on the screen between plays. This can range from play information to naming a scorer or showing the league scores from other games.

Each club has a squad of 45 players, split into three separate teams: Offensive, Defensive and Special. The Offensive and Defensive teams need little explanation, while the Special team simply consists of players who are expert kickers.

Up to two players can compete at a time; either playing against one another, or joining forces to take on a computer opponent. In the latter case one controls the Offense and one controls the Defense, but both take part in all plays.

The practice options allow kicking or, in this case, running plays to be worked on and refined without the irritation of an opposition to contend with.

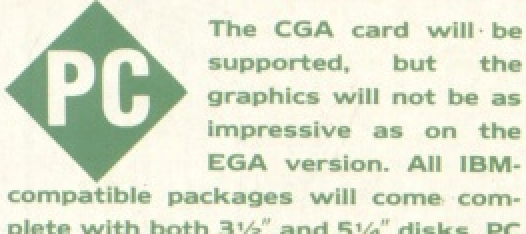




The TV-style presentation includes the usual 'creep in a suit' who for some reason always ends up presenting these programs. Bad as he is though, he's far preferable to the weirdo who shows up to give a half-time analysis. Is this what made American TV what it is today?



ST The PC and Amiga versions are set to coincide with this year's Superbowl, however the ST version won't be available in time so it is being held over until the beginning of the next season in Autumn 1989. The only tangible difference will be a little extra disk swapping, but this should be offset by the slightly lower price tage of £24.99.



PC The CGA card will be supported, but the graphics will not be as impressive as on the EGA version. All IBM-compatible packages will come complete with both 3½" and 5¼" disks. PC owners can expect a similar release date and price as their Amiga owning buddies.

A TV Sports Football incorporates every feature of the game, wrapped up in one of the most polished presentations I've ever seen in any computer game. In fact it takes its television style so seriously that if you choose not to take part at any stage during the game it continues to play all by itself! It's hard to believe how much the Cinemaware team has managed to fit in here – imagine a fully playable football game, with numerous plays and options AND the facility to allow 27 other people to join in – it's staggering! The graphics are marvellous throughout, as we've come to expect, and the control method is exceptionally well devised – if a little difficult to get to grips with. Grunts and groans, crowd noises and babbling commentators also contribute to this unique atmosphere. If you're already an American Football fan, then this could well become the reason that you bought your Amiga – if not this may be just the introduction that you need. It's what Sundays were invented for.

PRICE	£29.99
RELEASE DATE	Early January
GRAPHICS	93%
SOUND	91%
PLAYABILITY	90%
VALUE	83%
OVERALL	**92%**





Cast out and alone, trained to kill and therefore too dangerous to live, Phil South takes solace in blasting Reds on his ST screen. But is Ocean's film tie-in enough to keep him pacified?

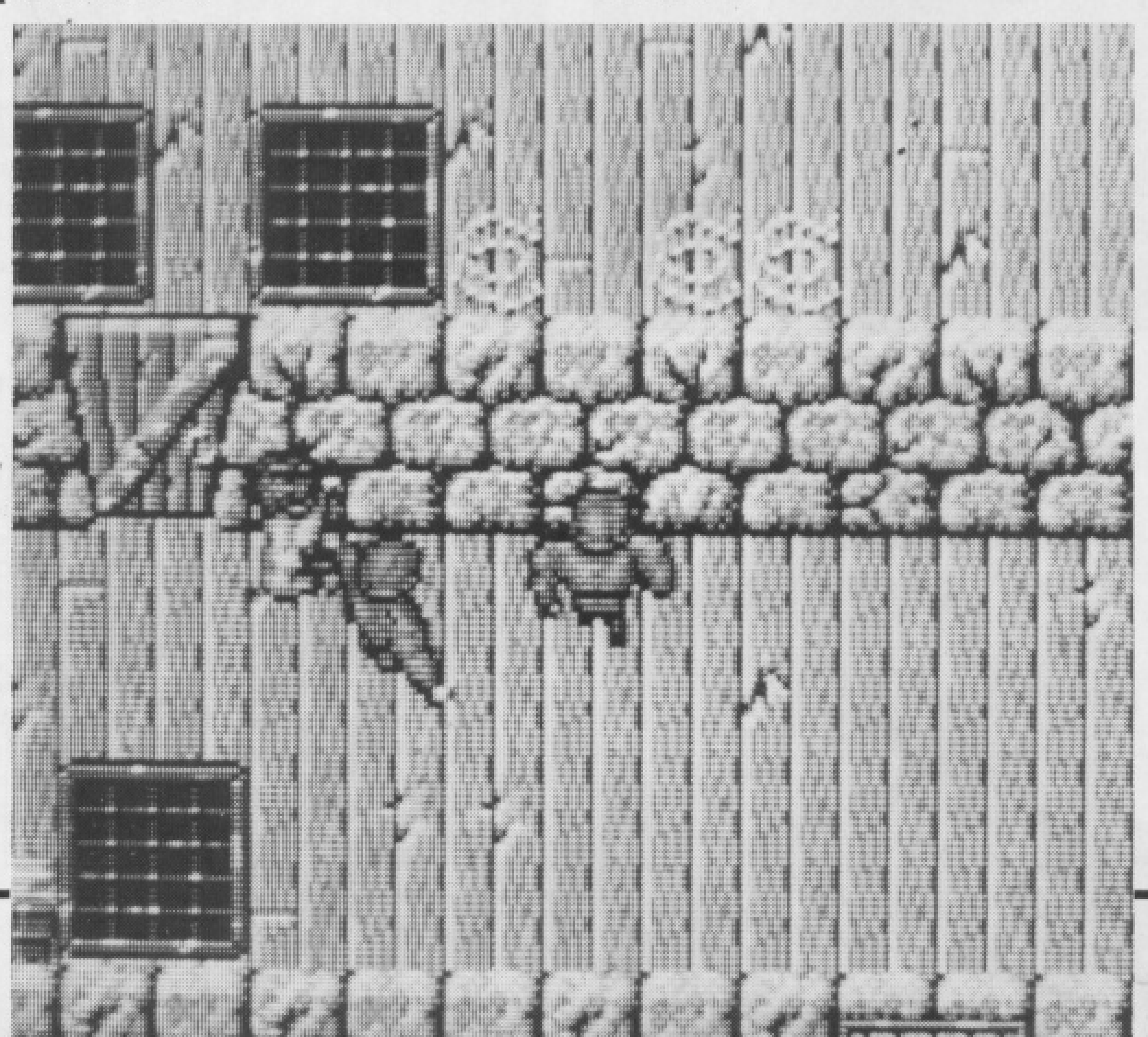
BEFORE... As your energy fades your handsome visage dissolves...

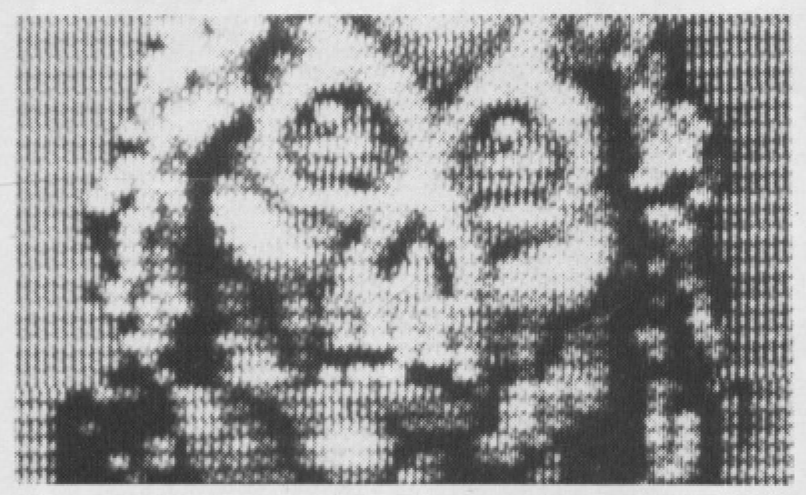
Level One finds you in a fort looking for your buddy Colonel Samuel Trautman, who's been caught with his pants down in Afghanistan teaching the Mujahideen how to kill more Reds per square nuke. The object is to work your way around stealthily without raising the alarm, so use your knife to stab the reds, and avoid standing in front of them or the alarm goes off and they seek you out.

Sylvester Stallone's greatest gravy train since the Rocky series began with First Blood, an adaptation of David Morrell's novel of the same name. John Rambo hit the screens as a misunderstood Vietnam veteran hounded by small-minded mid-American policemen. Saved from certain death by his old commander, Colonel Trautman, the muscular meathead finished his first move *en route* to a high security penitentiary.

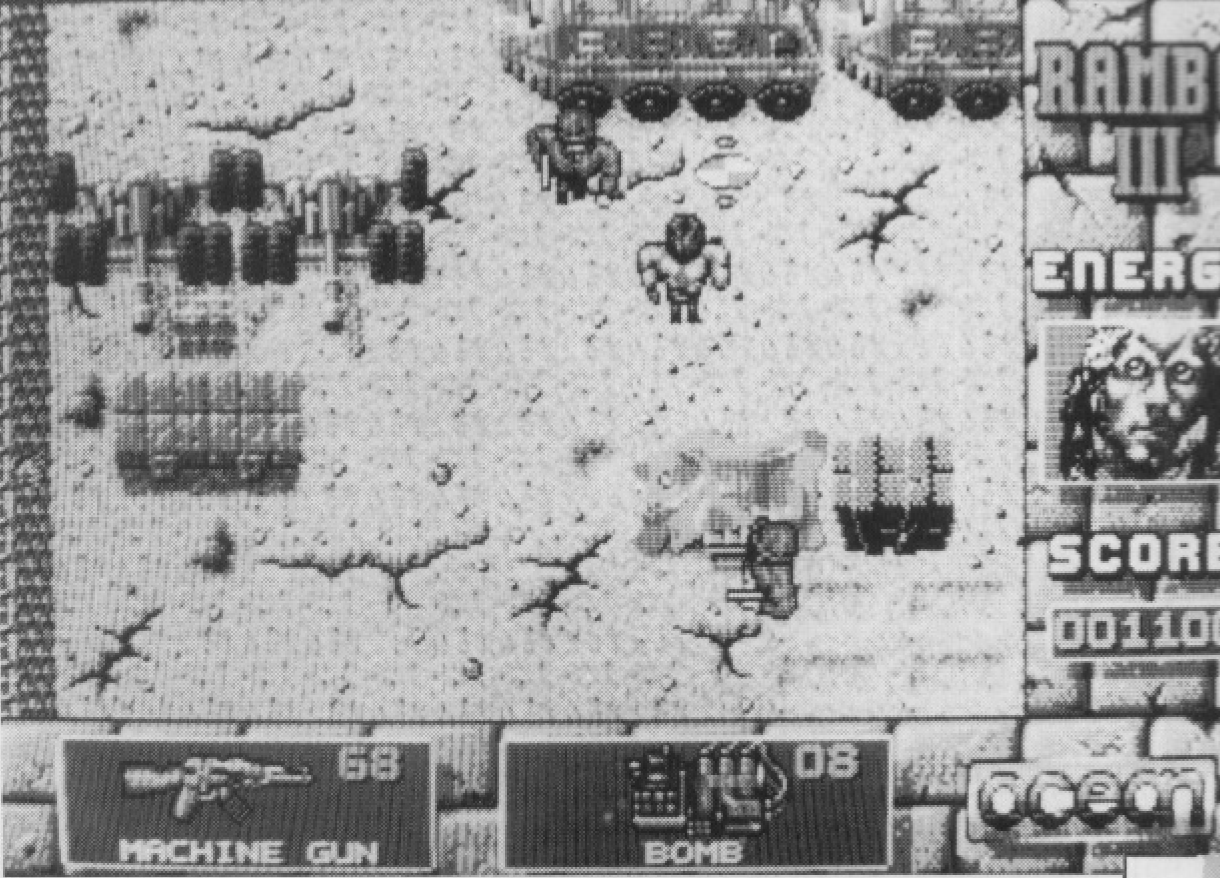
Rambo the movie (subtitled First Blood Part II) came next, with our hero released from prison and packed off to Vietnam to rescue all those poor GIs who couldn't manage to get themselves out of the country more than 10 years previously.

Armed only with his monumental intellect (and in case that failed him, an explosive bow and arrow), Rambo succeeded where the might of the US army failed and beat the slit-eyed

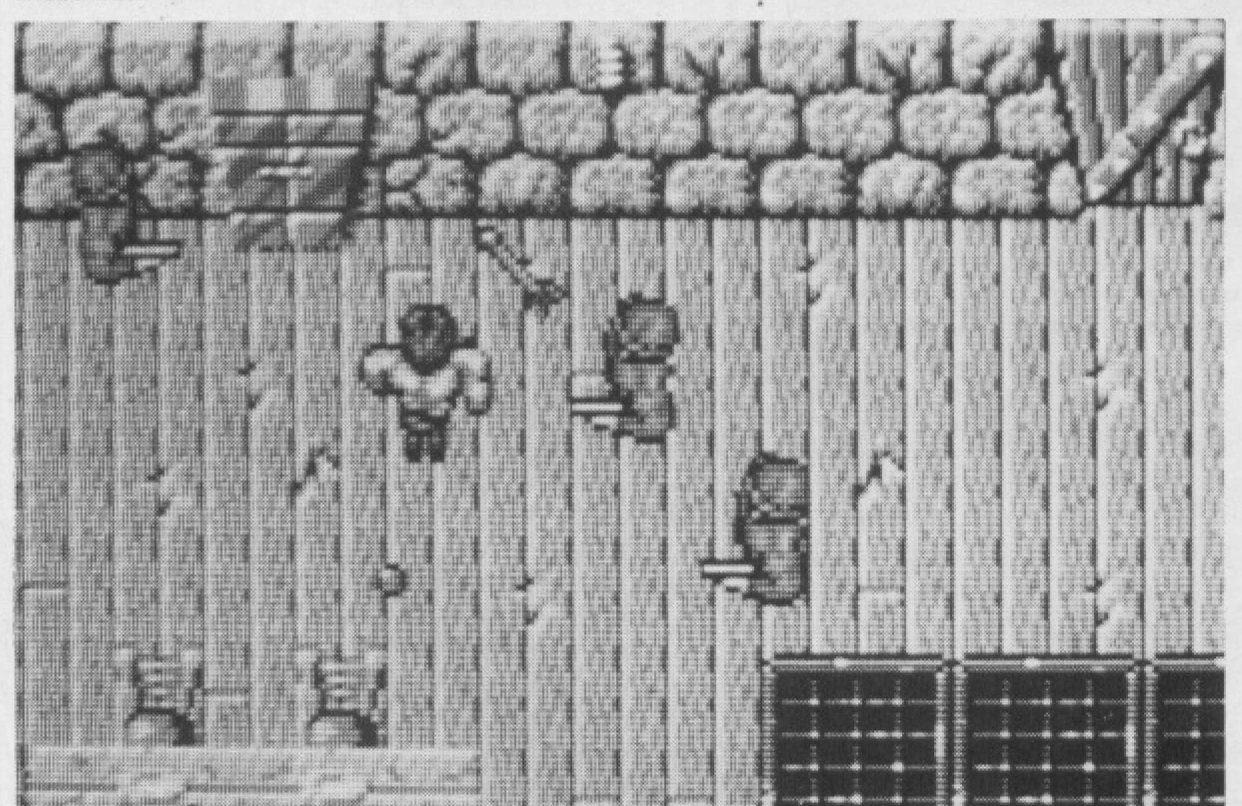




AFTER... into a horrific skull. Erm, are you sure these pics are the right way round, meathead?



Having recovered your clinically insane military chum, you can then barge around the compound planting eight bombs on the markers that the Reds have thoughfully provided. Bombs on these spots cause maximum damage to their compound, and neatly cover your escape by simultaneously killing as many people as possible.



Useful weapons such as these arrows are handily placed around the encampment – good thing too, otherwise you wouldn't stand a Russian's chance of finding the Colonel. Of course he's not just sitting around twiddling his Sidewinder missiles. He's under guard, and very hard to find.

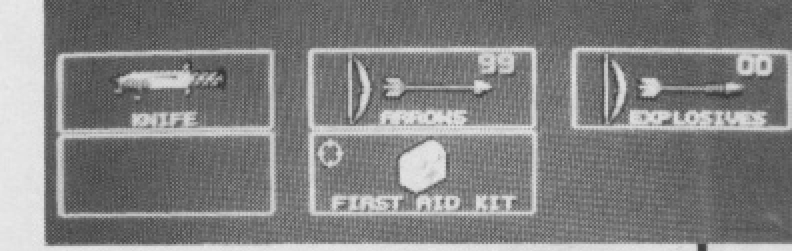
Commies to a pulp. One more blow struck for freedom.

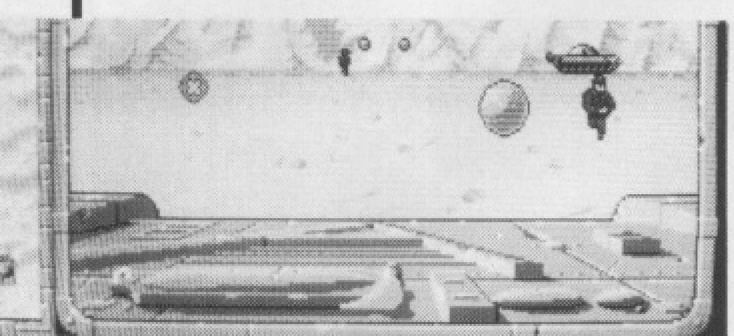
Two down, and, unfortunately, at least one to go. Although the first movie was a pretty violent affair, it did attempt to deliver some kind of social message – the second, however, was nothing more than an excuse for Sly to flex his muscles in an orgy of violence and xenophobia (ask your librarian).

And then came Rambo II (pardon my asking, but whatever happened to Rambo II?), an inexcusable waste of money and resources where Sylvester once more flexed his pecs, only this time in a badly timed excursion to help win the fight against Communism in Afghanistan. Badly timed, because during the film's production the Russians had the bad taste to begin a withdrawal from Afghanistan that left Stallone with a plot that's about as credible as an average episode of the A-Team.

And speaking of the A-Team, Rambo III had just about as deep a plot as is usually contained in that show's half hour format – unfortunately spread over a full 90 minutes. In fact Sylvester Stallone has so little to say in this movie that one Hollywood observer worked out that he was paid roughly

The inventory screen where John Rambo accesses a number of useful functions. Some icons represent weapon upgrades while others are one-off 'Ramb-aids' – like the First Aid package which refreshes his on-screen visage and effectively restores his energy level.





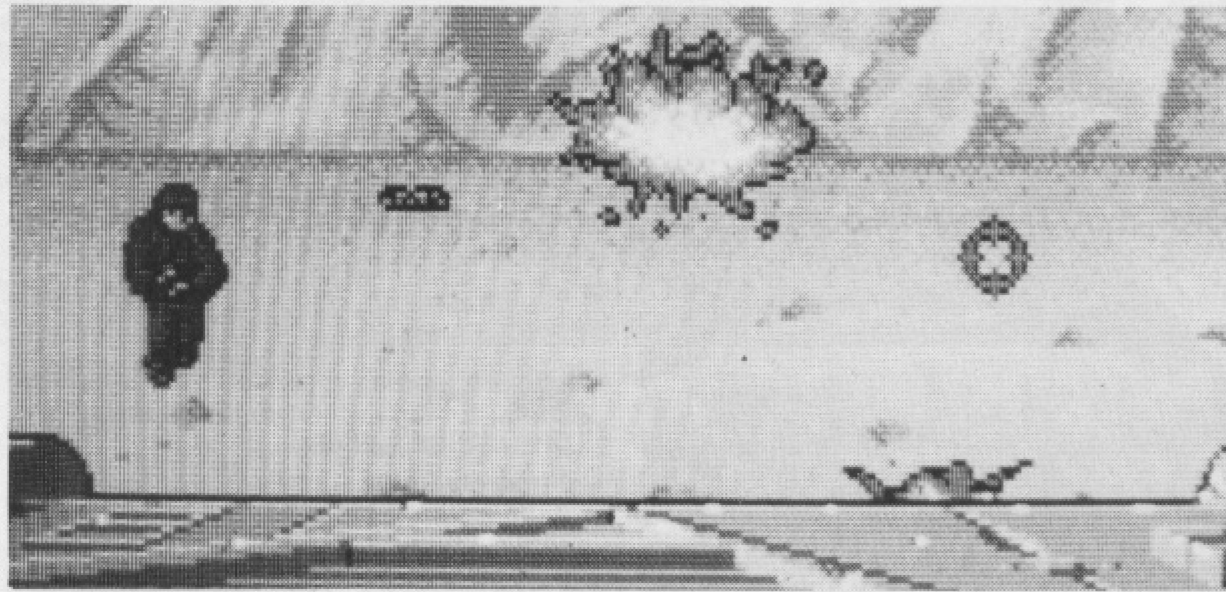
Finally you steal a tank and race for the border. I figure a Ferrari would have been faster but unfortunately the Reds don't use 'em in Afghanistan. Draw a bead and splat as many Ivans as you can. It's a good idea if you shoot the missiles **BEFORE** they hit you, as this can cause fatal end of level.

THE CHOPPERS

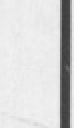
Although this Russian Mi-24 helicopter has become one of the most recognisable images from the film's marketing campaign, it was in fact a converted American Gazelle which was actually used in filming. For obvious reasons, the Russian army wasn't prepared to make one of its military aircraft available for the production, so a dismantled Gazelle was transported to Israel strapped to the fuselage of a 747 and reassembled with the addition of external combat wings – and voila! A brand new imitation Mi-24.



To escape the compound, simply find some explosive tipped arrows and blow the gate back to **Moscow**. The interesting bit comes when you try and escape before you get nuked, as more often than not you don't seem to have any time to leave before you get waxed.



Hey, this has got to be the best effect in the game, as you hit a tank four times, it explodes into a thousand hot shards of metal with a sound like a water bomb hitting a concrete outhouse. Ah! You can't beat an Atari sound chip. Well you can, but after a while your hands bleed.

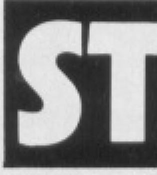
$100,000 per word for his efforts!

Financially, Rambo III wasn't as massive a success as its predecessors, so chances are that this will be the last in the series. However, Hollywood gossip has leaked the possibility that John Rambo may actually end up appearing in the next Rocky movie!

Believe it or not, one idea which was put forward for Rocky 5 was that the hero should be kidnapped while boxing in a politically sensitive country. And guess who's chosen to get him out? You got it. In a still stranger twist, the two characters then discover that they are actually twins who've been separated at birth! Presumably they then ride off into the sunset together – truly this man is of unusual genius.

And so we hit the blockbusting game of the blockbusting movie. Just as Rambo II is a three-line movie, **Rambo III** the game is a three load compendium. Each load's a game in itself, and to be honest you have to bundle all three together to come up with anything worthwhile. All you're left with after the initial gloss rubs off is three crummy re-runs of military genre games in one hard to swallow capsule.

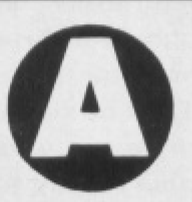
Rambo's favourite weapon is a special copyrighted knife designed and built by an expert Kentucky knifesmith, Gil Hibban, who has been making quality knives for over 30 years. Three-hundred and fifty of these have been manufacturered as a limited edition, with one of them fetching more than $1,700 recently in **New York City**.



The game is basically a clone of Pandora's Into The Eagles Nest for the first level, Commando for the second and an inferior Operation Wolf for the finale. The graphics are okay, but not stunning, and serve to highlight the game's possibilities as a really good 8-bit product. As an ST game it's a repetitive (and occasionally plain boring) 'kill and collect' mission, with tedious gameplay and shallow goals. There's no real incentive to continue at most stages, and failure is discouraging. The plot is uninspired, but in actual fact it does stick quite closely to the film's script. This isn't very difficult though, as you'll recall if you've seen the picture.

PRICE	£19.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	58%
SOUND	42%
PLAYABILITY	62%
VALUE	61%

OVERALL 59%

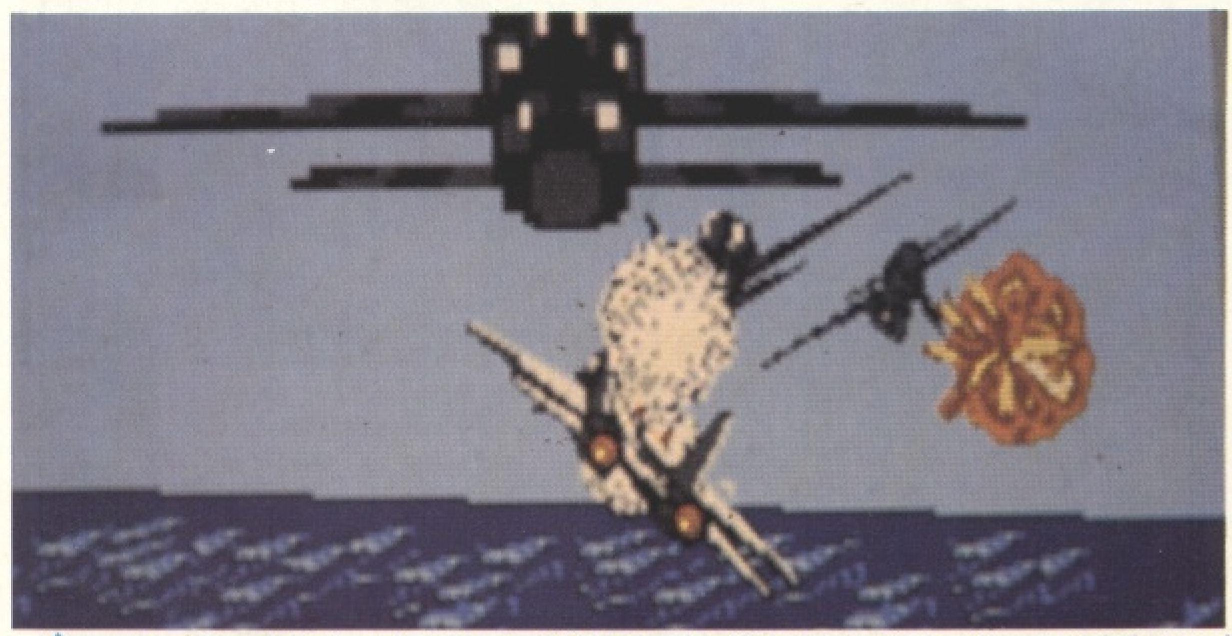


Imagine a game with no graphics, no sound and no gameplay... that's right, Ocean has decided not to produce an Amiga version.


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Afterbu



"Careful! Enemies Three O'Clock! Wow!" Listen out for the sampled speech (complete with American accent) that precedes each attack wave. Get a missile lock on those approaching bandits and blow them out of the sky

Anybody who's seen Top Gun will already be vaguely familiar with the F-14, as that was the very plane featured in the film. In fact it's been argued that Afterburner draws a lot of its inspiration from Top Gun, such as the identically-named aircraft carrier, Enterprise, and much of the sampled speech. In fact, Sega's promotional literature for Afterburner even features digitised pictures of Tom Cruise!

Getting down to matters technical, the Grumman F-14 Tomcat is the fifth in the 'cat' series of naval fighter planes, and was preceded by the Wildcat, Hellcat, Bearcat and Tigercat. Officially classed as a two-seater long range fleet defence fighter, the twin geometry (swing wing) twin engine Tomcat made its first appearance way back in September 1974 and served in the Western Pacific.

Today the F-14 is the pride of the US Navy and has embarked on over 40 tours of duty. It can engage and destroy targets located over a hundred miles away, and its advanced radar is capable of tracking as many as 24 targets at any one time, locking its lethal AIM-54 Phoenix missiles onto any six of those.

But beware, all this mind-blowing technology comes with an equally mind-blowing price tag attached. Before the Air Force launched its fabled F-19 Stealth Fighter, it was the most expensive of all military aircraft, costing a cool $42 million (that's over £26 million!).

Undoubtedly some of the biggest and best games in the coin-op industry today have come from Sega. **OutRun**, **Super Hang-On**, **Thunderblade** and **Space Harrier** were all great successes, but quite possibly bigger than all of these was **Afterburner**, released at the very beginning of '88.

Activision scooped up the conversion rights to **Afterburner** just months after its release amid cries of "It can't be done", and farmed out the job of conversion to Argonaut Software, the team behind **Starglider** and **Starglider II**.

Like all the best arcade games, **Afterburner** is incredibly simple. Just saddle up your Grumman F-14A Tomcat jet fighter and burn your way through 23 levels of enemy-infested territory, blowing away everything that gets in your way (and making sure you don't get knocked out in the process) by using an unlimited supply of 20mm bullets and a limited amount of heat-seeking Sidewinder missiles.





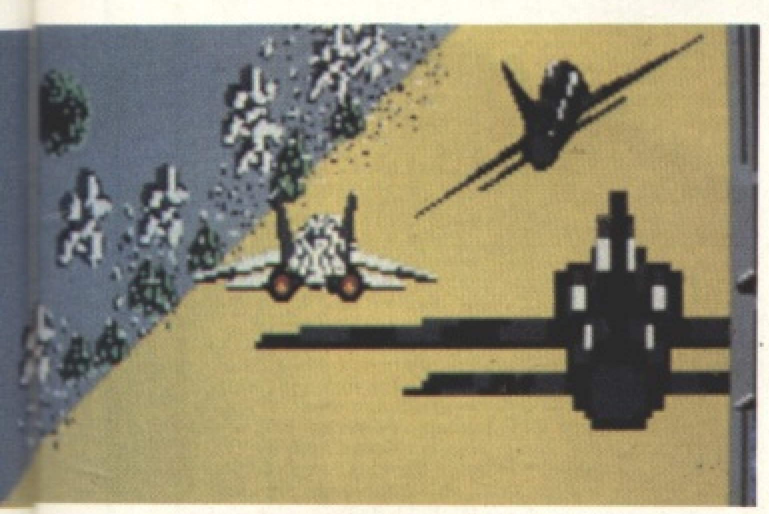
Strap on your oxygen mask and buckle down into your ejector seat as Activision's conversion of the record-breaking Sega coin-op takes off. Gary Whitta feels the need, the need for speed...



The frenetic action takes a back seat for a few seconds when the F-14 stops to refuel and replenish its supplies of Sidewinders courtesy of that large spaceship-type aircraft above.

urner





Woooaah! The landscape spins uncontrollably and the passing MiGs are bewildered as the F-14 performs a barrel roll. But it's not just a graphic frill – it's the only way you can avoid the infra-red tracking missiles that appear on later levels.

Another well-earned breather is provided when the F-14 lands back at a friendly airstrip to re-arm. The servicemen may look like they've stepped out of a Lowry painting but the attention to detail is great: watch out for the Segaisms in the form of the OutRun car and the neat Super Hang-On motorcycle outriders that appear. Chuckle.

Now you've got through the lines of airborne defences you can cause some REAL damage by embarking on a vicious strafing run over the concealed enemy base. Steer your way through the valley, taking out tanks, trucks, tents, pylons and hangars for bonus points, but watch out for the ever-narrowing canyon walls.

Serious trouble appears on Stage Seven in the form of an enemy infra-red missile coming up from behind. Luckily warning lights at the top of the screen flash to alert you to it just before it appears on screen so you get a chance to barrel-roll out of the way before it hits you.

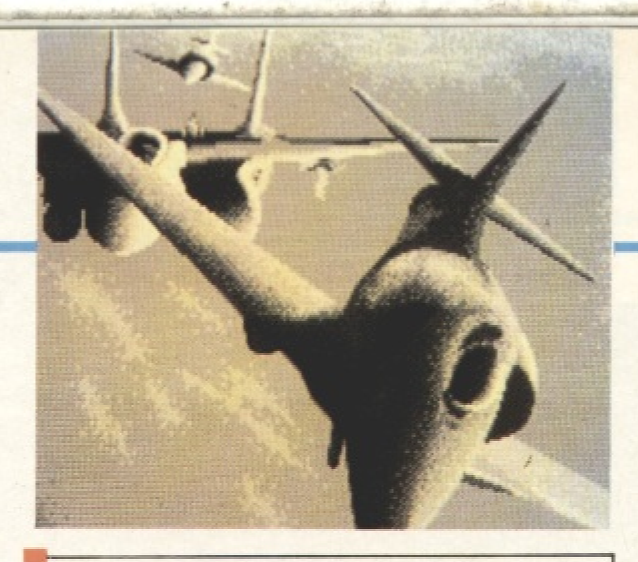




The F-14's weaponry comprises two independent systems, cannons and missiles. Cannons fire constantly and always aim at the fixed cursor that hovers immediately in front of the plane, destroying anything that strays into its path. Missiles however, only come into action when enemies appear from the front, whereupon each target is locked onto with a tracking cursor (signified by the 'Lock On' LED being illuminated). Line up with any of the prospective targets and squeeze the trigger to launch a lethal sidewinder. But beware, the MiGs fire back, and the dense smoke plumes left by their missiles must be avoided (and not confused with those left by your own sidewinders).



REVIEW





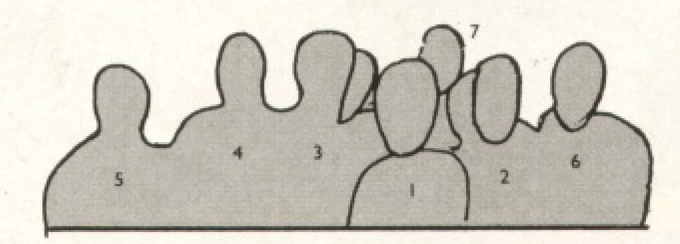
Technically the Afterburner **coin-op may not be quite as incredible as the plane it simulates, but it certainly has a few staggering statistics to its credit. The deluxe sit-down model weighs in at over 800lbs and stands nearly two metres high. Inside there are two 16-bit processors coupled with an 8-bit processor to handle all the graphics and manipulate the 32,000 colours it's capable of generating on its 20 inch monitor. The sound and music is in DA and FM Stereo and each of the four loudspeakers delivers 10 watts of power.**Afterburner's **hydraulic system is possibly the most advanced to date and is guaranteed to disorientate anybody when they play for the first time by throwing and jolting them violently in four directions in time with the joystick movements to simulate the sensation of high-G aerial combat.**



Bingo! The F-14 locks on and launches a lethal sidewinder that sends the unfortunate MiG to the big hangar in the sky. But you can't rest on your laurels, there's plenty more where that one came from.

Jez San and his Argonauts are no strangers to the ST and Amiga. The vector-graphic space flight simulator Starglider and its filled 3D sequel Starglider II were both pronounced classics when they were released nearly two years apart. Afterburner is the company's first project since the completion of Starglider II. The conversion was based on lengthy playing sessions on the Afterburner coin-op at Activision's Software Production Studios in Southampton and videos of the entire game being played from beginning to end. "The biggest challenge was to get it looking and feeling like the real thing," says Richard Clucas, Argonaut's manager of the Afterburner project. Remaining faithful to the original coin-op took top priority, and Argonaut believes it's succeeded.





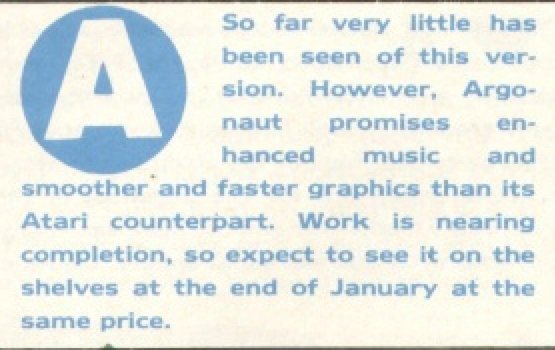
The Argonauts by numbers: 1. Richard Clucas; 2. Jez San; 3. Ian Crowther; 4. John Wolfe; 5. James Hakewith; 6. Chris Humphries; 7. Peter Warn.

ST

Coin-ops have become increasingly sophisticated in recent years, but sadly the software is now second place to the hardware. The humble coin-op has almost become a fairground ride, albeit at the expense of the once all-important gameplay which has now taken a backseat to elaborate dedicated cabinets. Sega is undoubtedly the company leading the way with its unique series of hydraulic-based machines with special hardware producing stunning graphics. But without the frills there are few thrills... US Gold's conversion of OutRun was little more than another racing game, and a mediocre one at that. Activision's conversion of Afterburner has suffered the same fate. Sure, Argonaut has managed to capture the features and what little gameplay there was in the original, but gone is the thrill of being thrown around in a hydraulic cabinet, gone are the breath-taking and exhilarating 3D graphics, and gone is the incentive to play. All that's left is a run-of-the-mill 3D shoot 'em up – and even then most of the shooting's done for you.

PRICE	£24.99
RELEASE DATE	Our Now
GRAPHICS	65%
SOUND	56%
PLAYABILITY	63%
VALUE	56%

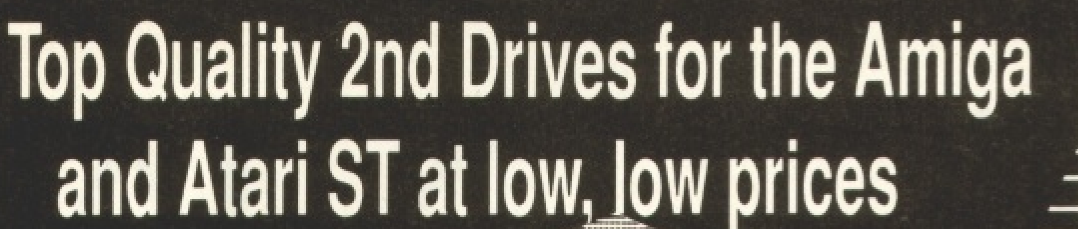
OVERALL 63%



So far very little has been seen of this version. However, Argonaut promises enhanced music and smoother and faster graphics than its Atari counterpart. Work is nearing completion, so expect to see it on the shelves at the end of January at the same price.



Activision has (surprisingly) commissioned a conversion to the PC, and this too is being handled by Argonaut. It should hit the streets about the same time as the Amiga incarnation (and again at the same price), but so far very little is known, apart from the likelihood of both CGA and EGA being supported.



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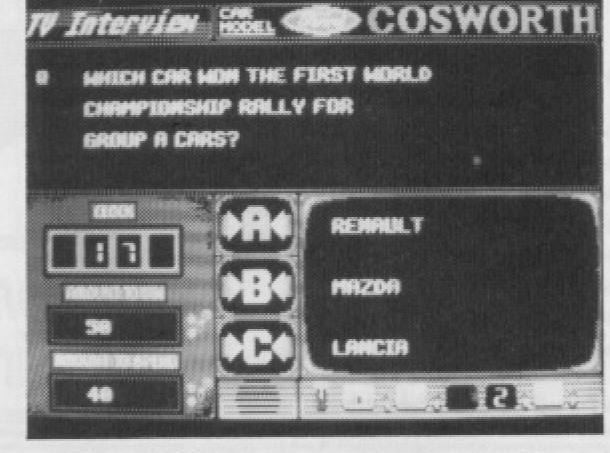
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Lombard R

Gary Whitta buckles up for the ride of his life in Mandarin's officially endorsed simulation of the classic cross-country race... and unwittingly writes off several Sierras in the process.



Wogan was never like this! Earning the money to customise your car isn't easy, and takes the form of a torturous trivia quiz cum TV interview. Read the comprehensive game manual before tackling this section to improve your chances of answering the rally-related questions you are asked. And watch that time limit.

One thing Mandarin has to be given credit for is its impeccable timing. **Lombard RAC Rally** has been released to coincide precisely with the start of the real thing, the highlight of the annual rally calendar. Written by Red Rat and produced with the help of Ford and the RAC, **Lombard RAC Rally** is a simulation essentially in the **Test Drive** mould but with some novel features thrown in for good measure.

This Year's Lombard RAC Rally is the 56th to be held. Originally called the Torquay Rally (simply because Torquay was the finishing point of the race), it was first run in March 1932 in a bid to create a British equivalent of the famed Monte Carlo Rally, and hopefully attract tourists to the coastal resorts of Britain and boost the country's flagging economy. The 1,000 mile route took the 341 contestants through Bath, Buxton, Edinburgh, Harrogate, Leamington, London, Newcastle and Norwich and there were several casualties due to there being no overnight stops along the way. The Second World War forced the rally to be postponed until 1951 whereupon the route was changed, with several new starting locations added and Silverstone chosen as the finishing point. The name of the rally was changed in 1974 when the Royal Automobile Club and Financial giant

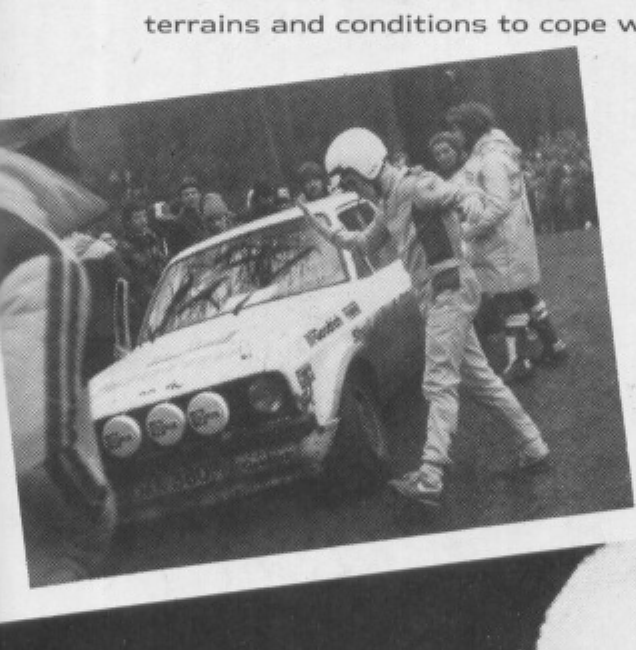
Definite shades of EA's Test Drive here as the Cosworth traverses the perilous winding mountain road. Watch out for the other drivers and remember to slow down when taking corners or get ready for a very long drop!



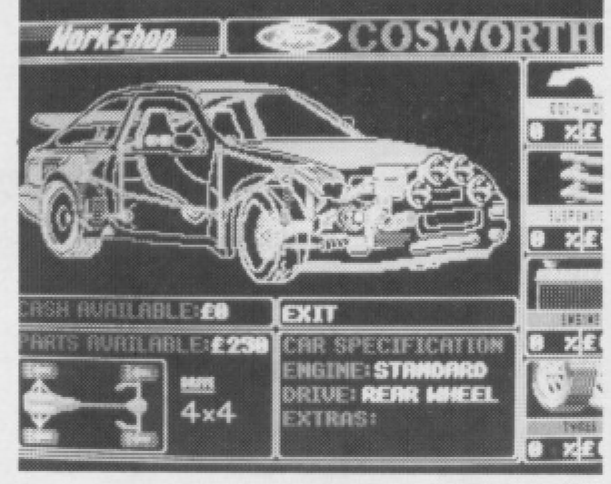
RAC Rally

Lombard agreed to sponsor the race. Today Ford has the highest success rate, topping other esteemed names such as SAAB, Jaguar, Volvo, Peugeot and Audi.

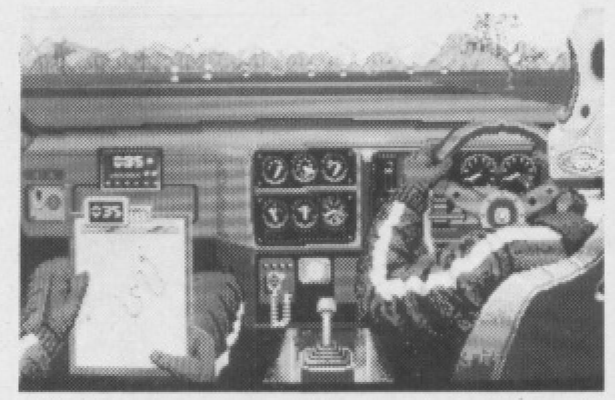
The rally takes place over five legs, or 15 stages. To be allowed to compete in the main race, all five legs must be finished and a prize must be won by being one of the first three to finish. Each leg consists of three independent stages, and each must be completed within the allotted time limit. As the rally takes the driver through such exotic locations as Telford, Harrogate and Carlisle, there are many different terrains and conditions to cope with.







If you want to finish the rally in one piece, you'd better give your car the modifications it needs before taking to the road. Should you change the tyres, customise the engine, fit stronger headlights or reinforce the suspension? The choice is yours (providing you've got the money). You might not be able to change your car as much as you can in, say EA's Ferrari Formula One**, but in practice, making the right choice is every bit as critical.**



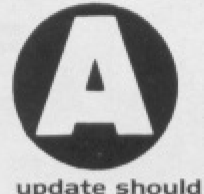
The player takes a direct driver's eye view of the game. The viewpoint is alarmingly low and obscured by the elaborate dashboard, giving an authentic effect of 'being there'. The road update can be jerky at times, but the roadside obstacles and effective OutRun **style hills and dips make up for this deficiency. The entire dashboard is fully animated, as is the driver who turns the wheel and changes gear realistically and in time with the player. A nice touch is the way that the road map is represented by the navigator's mapboard that slowly fills in the distance covered as the car travels.**

The Lombard Rally drivers don't stop when the sun goes down, so switch on the headlights that you should have fitted back at the workshop and get moving. If you think that your view of the road is bad here, just wait until the fog sets in!

ST

The ST has been starved of any decent racing simulations, bar Test Drive, although there has been numerous failed attempts to rectify this. Lombard RAC Rally however is the first to genuinely succeed. It's a competent simulation and also a fun racing game in its own right, being more fun to drive than the more arcade-orientated efforts such as OutRun and Crazy Cars. The 3D road effect slows down at times but on the whole it's very convincing indeed, with the realistic animation on the driver as he steers and changes gear helping to convey the feeling of 'being there'. Sound is put to good use all round with sampled engine sounds on the opening sequence, but unfortunately the music's pretty lame. Lombard RAC Rally isn't without its minor bugs and glitches, but when the many good points are taken into account, it's an admirable effort worthy of any race fan's attention.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	71%
SOUND	68%
PLAYABILITY	78%
VALUE	65%
OVERALL	**73%**



No major differences are expected, but the sound is likely to be enhanced (surprise, surprise) and the road update should speed up just a tad.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	December



Details on the PC version are rather vague, but it should support both EGA and CGA, and all the features of the ST will be included.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	December

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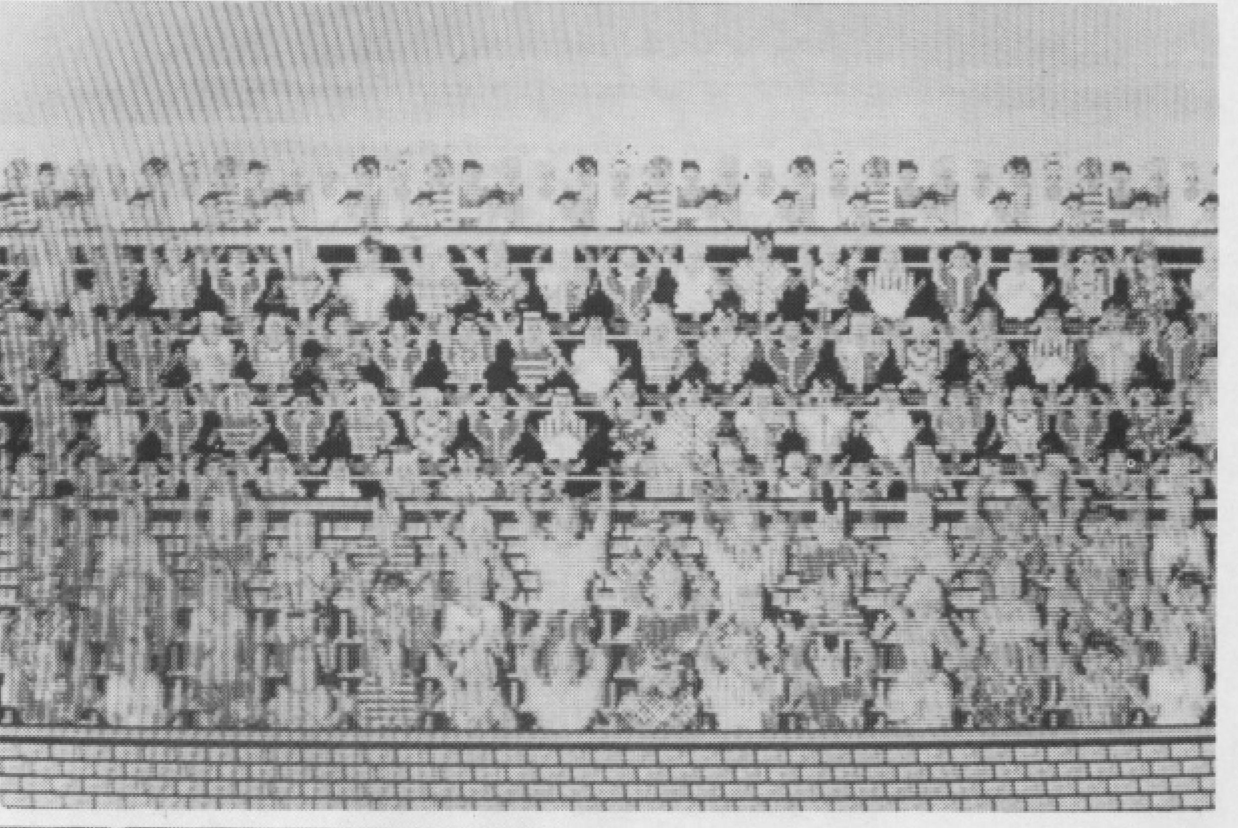
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PHANTOM
FIGHTER

Hotb

French software house Satory hopes to hit the big league with its new soccer game, promising 'amazing graphics and fantastic managability'. But Paul Boughton blows the whistle and calls a foul.

It's there! The ref blows his whistle and the hapless goalie exclaims "Huh? What?" As the ball sears (well, trundles) over the line. One nil, One nil...



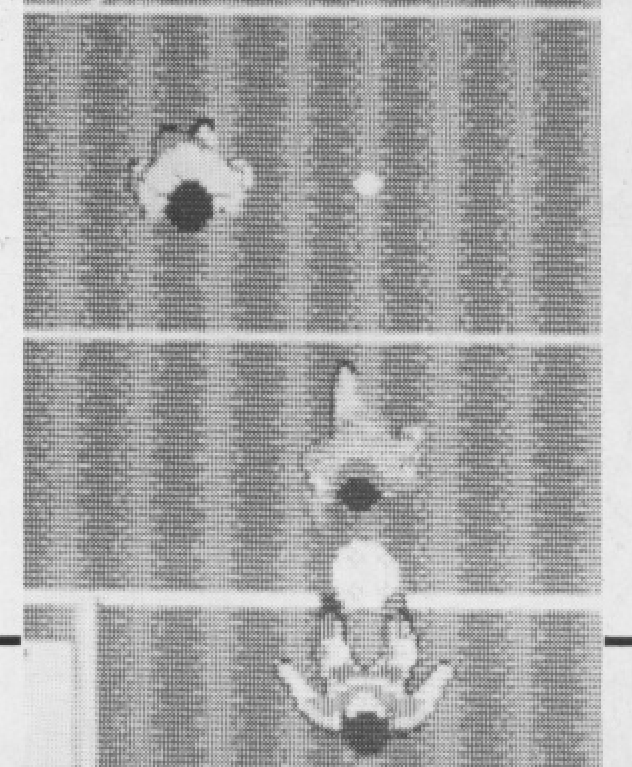
The crowd are on their feet (probably all set to go home).

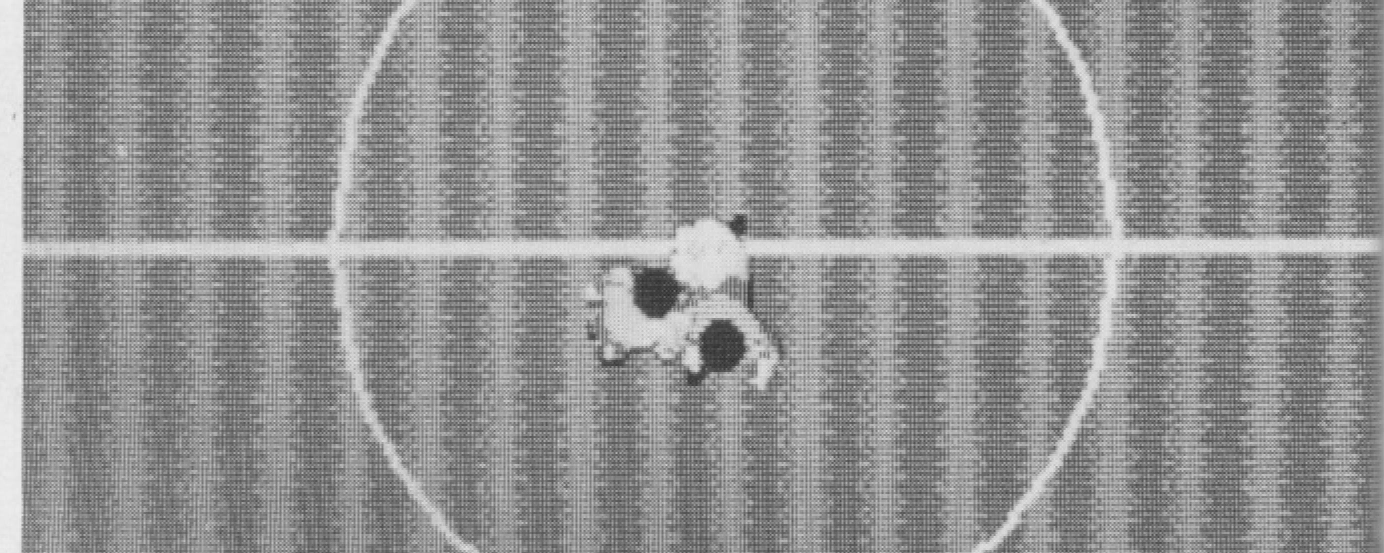
Up until now I was under the impression that the French play the same sort of soccer that we do – I'm beginning to have second thoughts. The packaging promises a game of football, but I ended up playing **Hotball** instead . . . and I don't know what it is, but it ain't footie.

One immediately striking feature is the four player joystick interface that comes with the package. However, if you introduced four friends to this game, I'm not sure they'd remain friends.

Despite the fact that there are only five basic choices to be made (level, joystick, players' names, duration and start), the options screen is downright confusing.

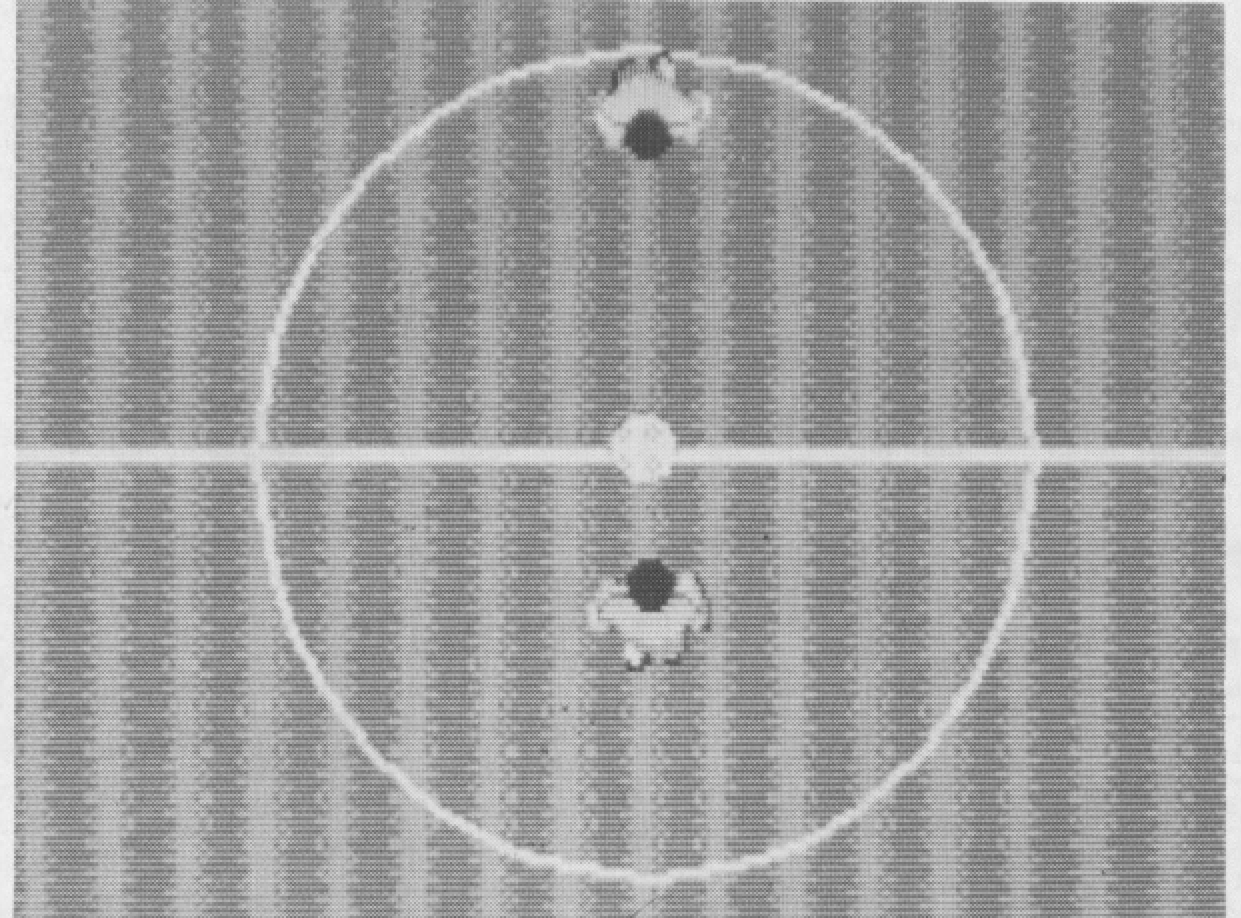
Matters aren't helped by the equally manky manual (well, scrap of paper actually) which reads as though it's been translated from French via some obscure African dialect.





all





ST

When the manual has eventually been waded through, the game itself is the final irritant. No attempt appears to have been made to make the characters move like human beings (let alone professional footballers), while the complete lack of tackling, shooting and passing skills turns the whole mess into an unwatchable procession. There's a lot of potential for producing a top class 16-bit football game. A small playing area, slow and awkward controls and graphics and sound add up to a comprehensive catalogue of errors. And as for the gameplay! The Quit feature is Hotball's most useful, and I found myself making great use of it. Hotball may have championship aspirations, but it looks to me as though it's ripe for relegation to the league of best-forgotten games.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	40%
SOUND	30%
PLAYABILITY	40%
VALUE	39%

OVERALL 37%



An Amiga version should be in the shops by the time you read this – but if the game is the same, no amount of graphic or sonic tweaking will improve it.

A TEAM PROFILE

The packaging contains curious and perhaps suggestive notes about the programmers, who, surprising as it may sound, all have a "passion" for football. Xavier Cador is "the tall guy, and therefore the boss. He managed the other people to complete their own task" (!)

Francois Guilleme is, apparently, a "great optimizer. He can work two months to gain two milliseconds in a routine." Nice work if you can get it.

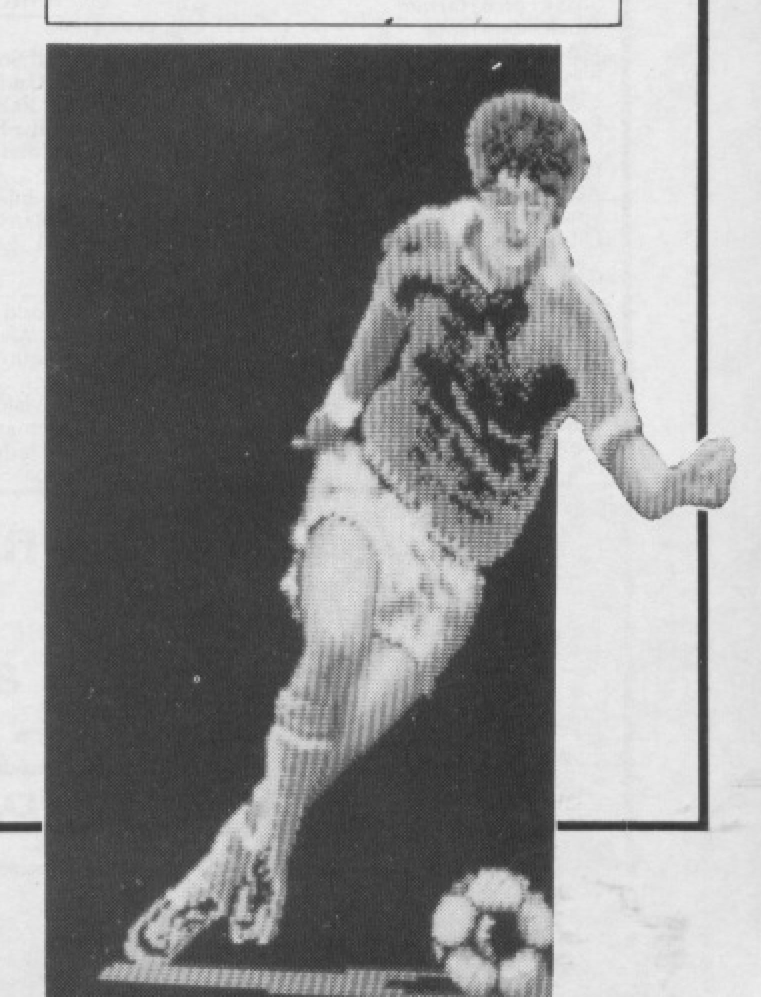
Rene Bourraqui "stumbled over a passing ball in a corner and had a middle finger damaged, right after he finished to design the Hall of Fame." (!!) Was he signalling to the ref, I wonder? Some mean spirited person might suggest it was a pity he hadn't damaged his finger before designing the Hall of Fame.

And there's Marc Bousquet who "spent over three years on the option page." I know how he felt. I spent quite a long time trying to work it out as well.

Michel Desangles "stopped the psycho-freak adaptation of Beethoven's ninth he was planning to do the music. But he spends more time on stadiums than on keyboards." Thank God for that. It's nice to see he settled for a mundane little tune after all.

Raise a cheer for Phillippe Chastel who "managed to take small bits of program from everyone and mix them all together." This explains a lot about Hotball in my opinion.

Now for my favourite – Marc Djan. He, apparently, "was often compared to Michelangelo and Andy Warhol, for the subtleness of his drawings, precision of his graphics and the smooth shades of his colours." Funnily enough, I thought I detected the influence of Michelangelo on the advertising hoardings around the pitch. And, undeniably, there's a Warholesque touch about the players' strip.





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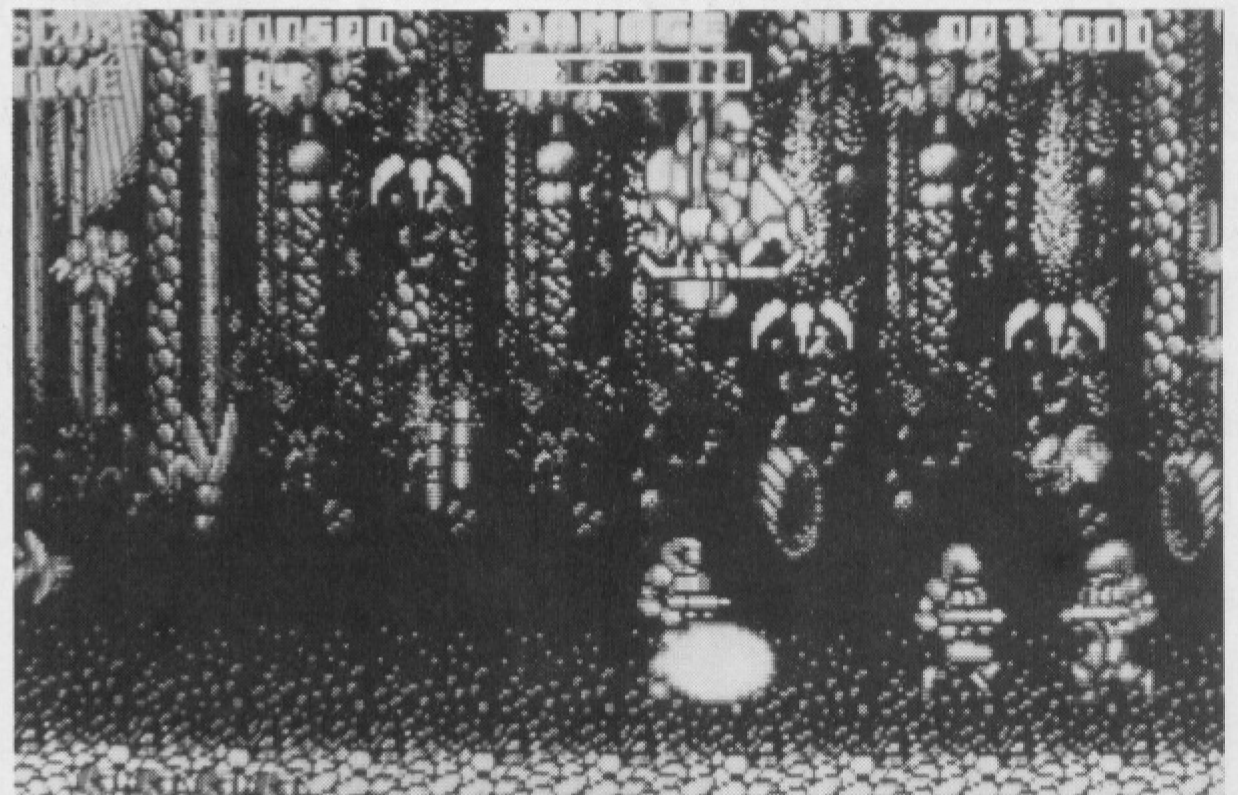


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Soldier Of Light

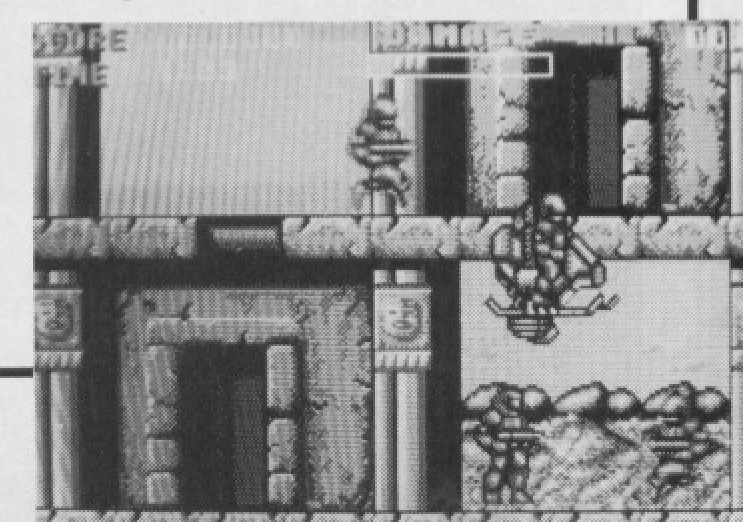
Brian Nesbitt takes time off from playing Ace's latest to ponder the age-old question: "What good is an accurate conversion of a second-rate coin-op?"

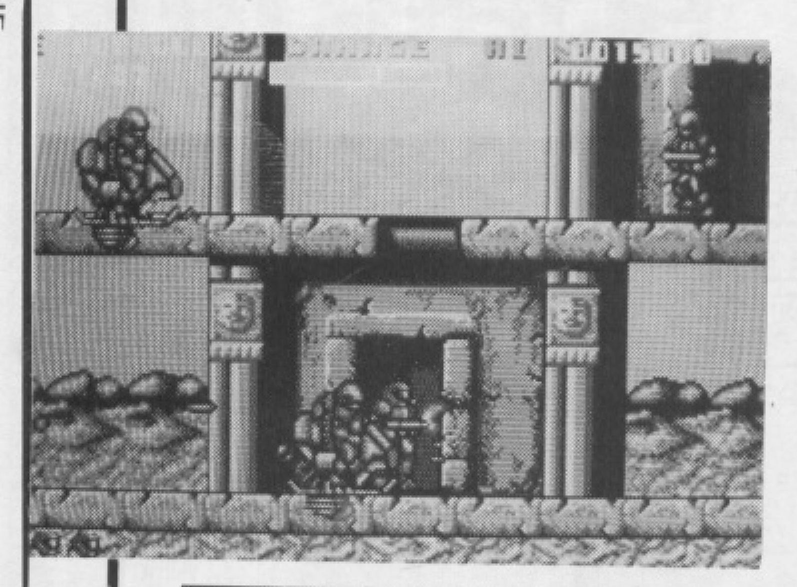


The Planet Lagto is a densely foliated jungle, infested with all manner of indigenous creatures such as swarms of flying killer bees, snapping triffid-like plants and a huge diplococus-like monster that spits green phlegm at Xain should he get too near. Not for the faint-hearted!

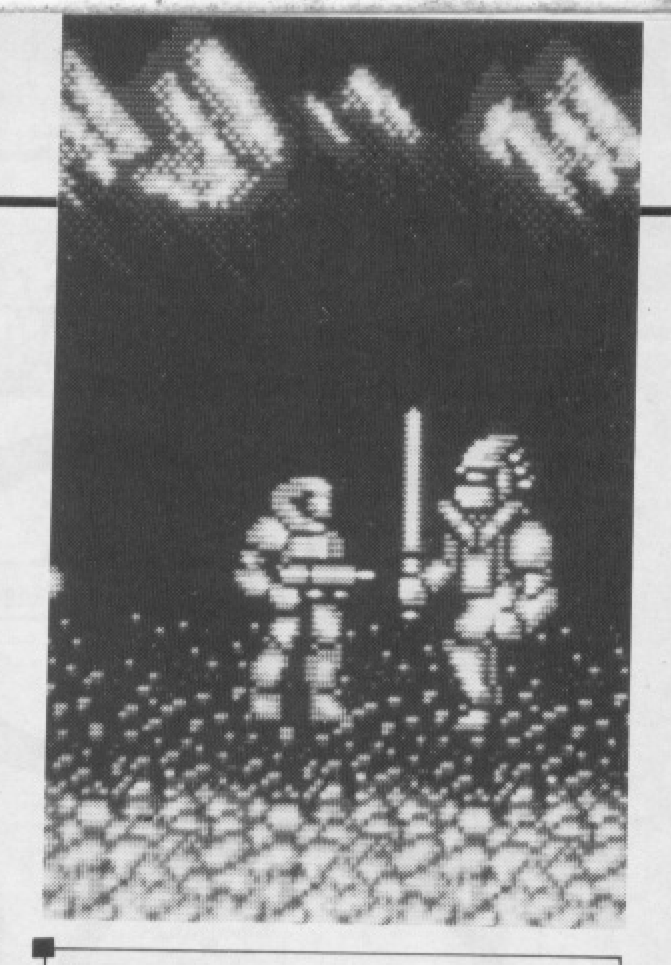
Arcade giant Taito has developed a reputation for always coming up with a hit. **Arkanoid**, **Continental Circus**, **Operation Wolf**, **Bubble Bobble** and **Flying Shark** were all successes, but the Japanese company has also had its share of flops, the most notable being **Soldier of Light**. Although the signing of this rather uninspired coin-op to Ace, The Edge's conversion label, was announced quite a while back, the 16-bit versions have been a long time coming. Now that they're finally here, it would seem that the wait hasn't been worth it.

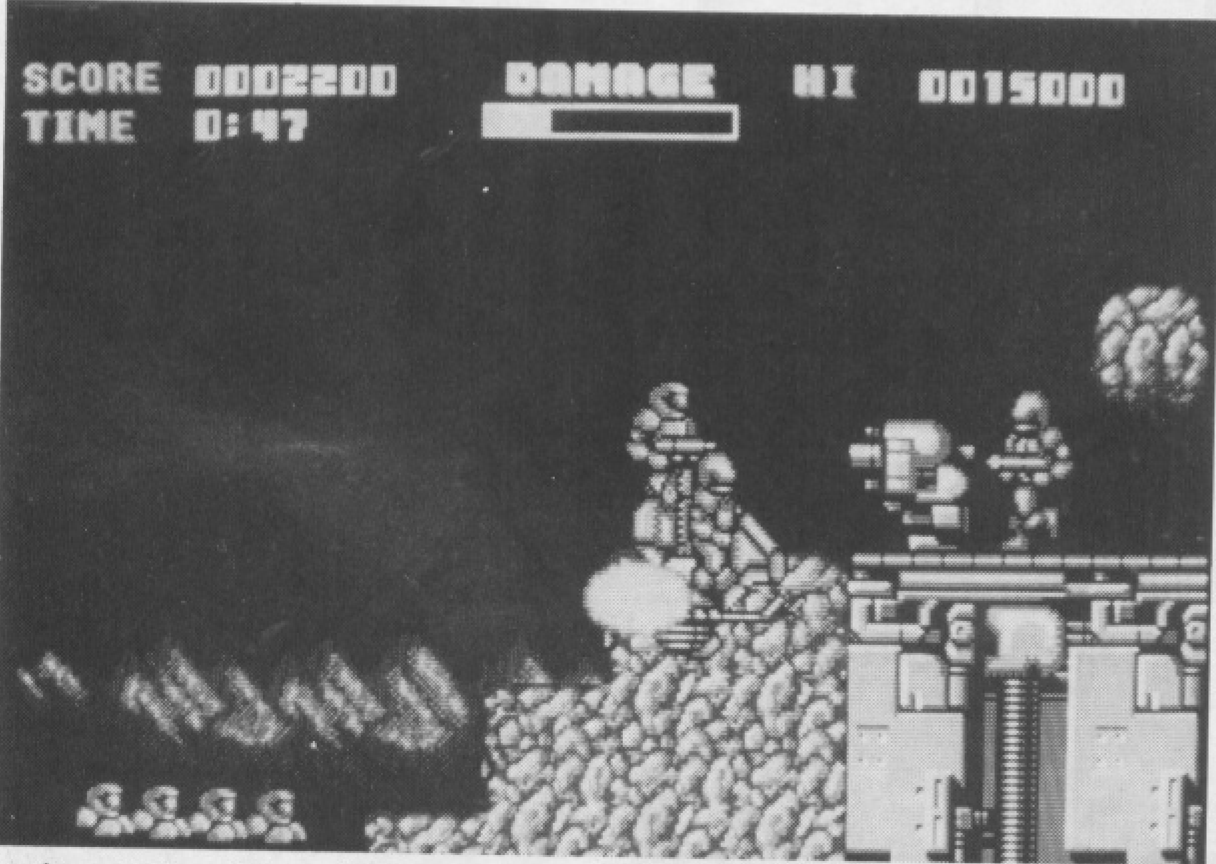
Cleedos is possibly the easiest planet of the lot and has a slight Egyptian flavour. More platform and ladders frolics here as Xain tries to kill a horrific floating laser-firing voodoo mask and at the end, believe it or not, a bomb-dropping nasty wearing a sombrero!



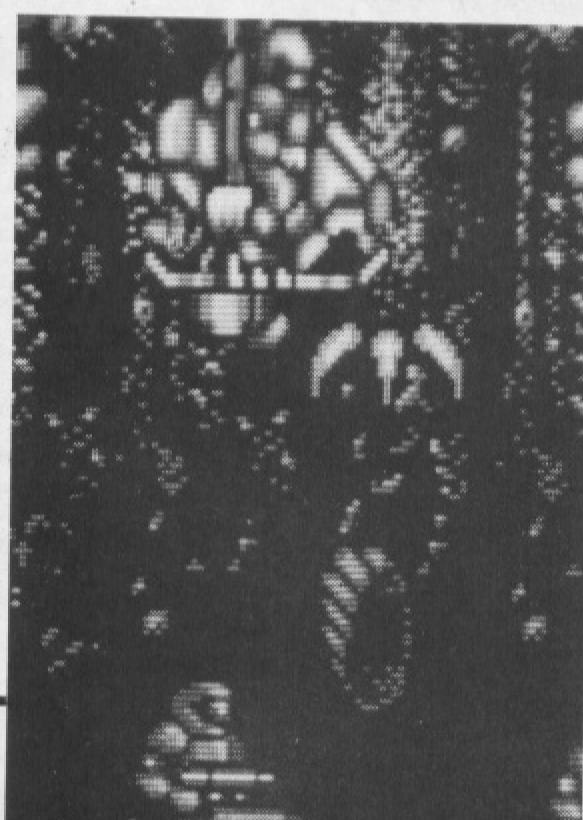


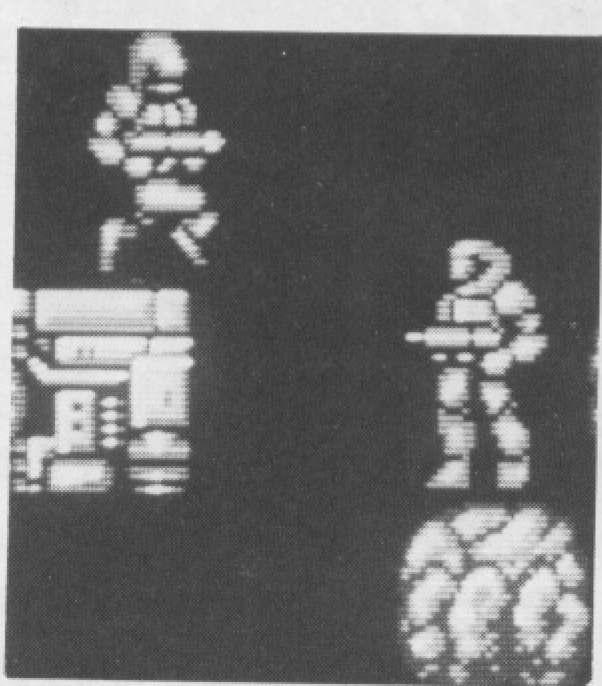
Dubiously subtitled Xain'd Sleena (!), **Soldier of Light** is a vertically and horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up that owes a lot to games like Konami's **Gryzor** and even **Ghosts 'n' Goblins**. It's a simple case of run from left to right, jump up and down platforms that appear from time to time, kill aliens, pick up extra weapons and fight a large creature at the end of each level. There are three planets to attack (although the original coin-op had five) which can be tackled in any order of preference.





▲ Cleenalt is probaby the hardest planet to conquer, and is populated by the evil empire's hi-tech hordes of soldiers, some of which bear a slight resemblance to RoboCop! Later in the level there's a series of floating rocks to negotiate to complete the planet, but watch out for the enemy jetpakcers!





ST

Following Ace's Alien Syndrome conversion, I expected to see a very faithful conversion of Soldier of Light – and to be fair, that's exactly what we've got here. The problem is that the coin-op was pretty dire in the first place and so the conversion was doomed from the start. The gameplay is very poor, with success seemingly depending more on luck than skill. Aesthetically it's not impressive, much like its coin-op parent, and the three levels just aren't enough to keep the hardened gamer going for any reasonable length of time. The space sub-game is fun, but it doesn't make enough appearances in the overall game to make an impact. Soldier Of Light is a good conversion of a poor arcade game. Fans of the original (and there can't be very many) should take a look but everyone else... steer clear.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	68%
SOUND	40%
PLAYABILITY	51%
VALUE	43%

OVERALL 53%



Expect to see a conversion almost identical to the ST version reviewed here. The graphics are unlikely to change (the gameplay certainly won't) and as per usual the only notable difference is likely to be the slightly enhanced sound.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	December

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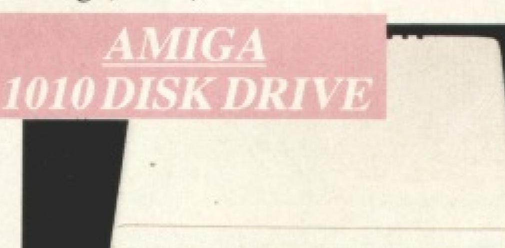
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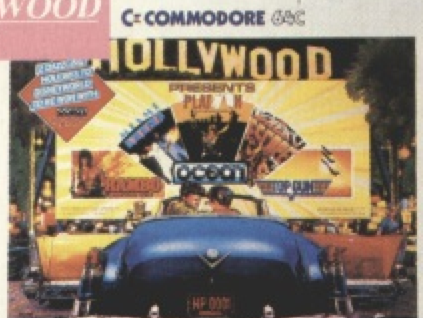


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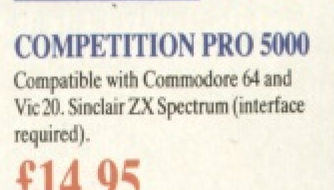
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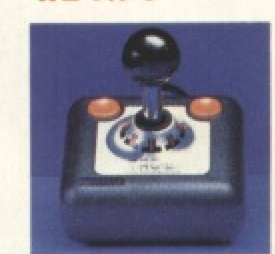
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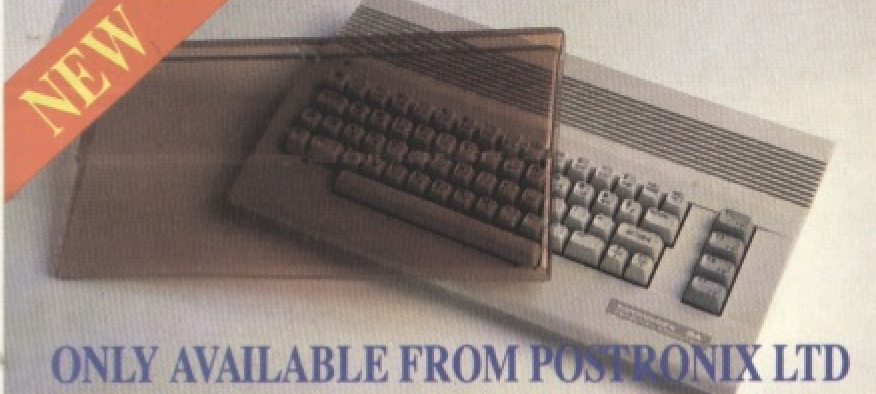
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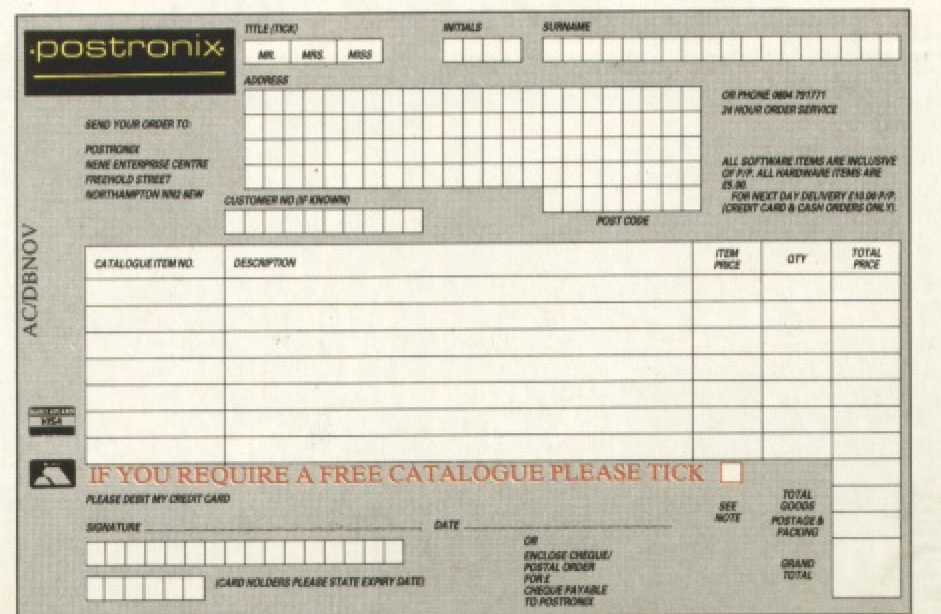


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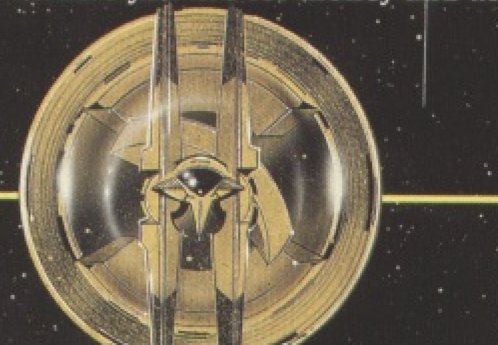
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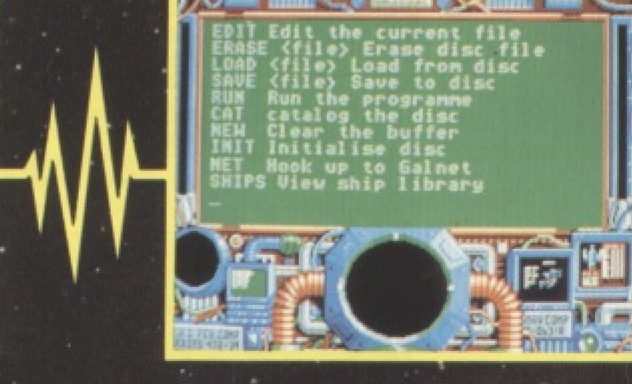
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Screen shots from Atari ST version.

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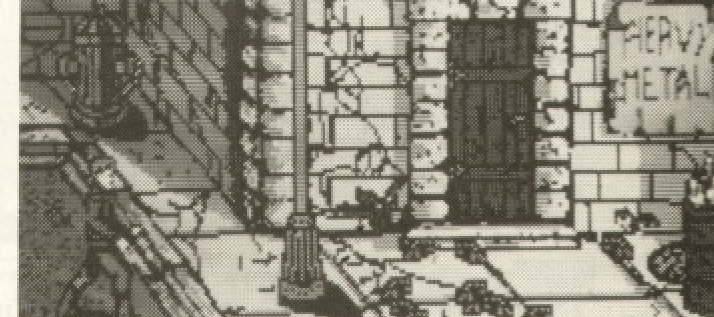
Manhattan Dealers



Fisticuffs in a drugs den... but watch the guy meditating behind the fighter in the white jim-jams.

Silmarils' latest is not, as the title might suggest, a New York casino simulator. The dealers in question work in the shadier area of narcotics, and Graham Taylor of a special Police Squad dusts off his knuckledusters to give them the once over.

Beware of the deadly Ninja flowerpot throwers...

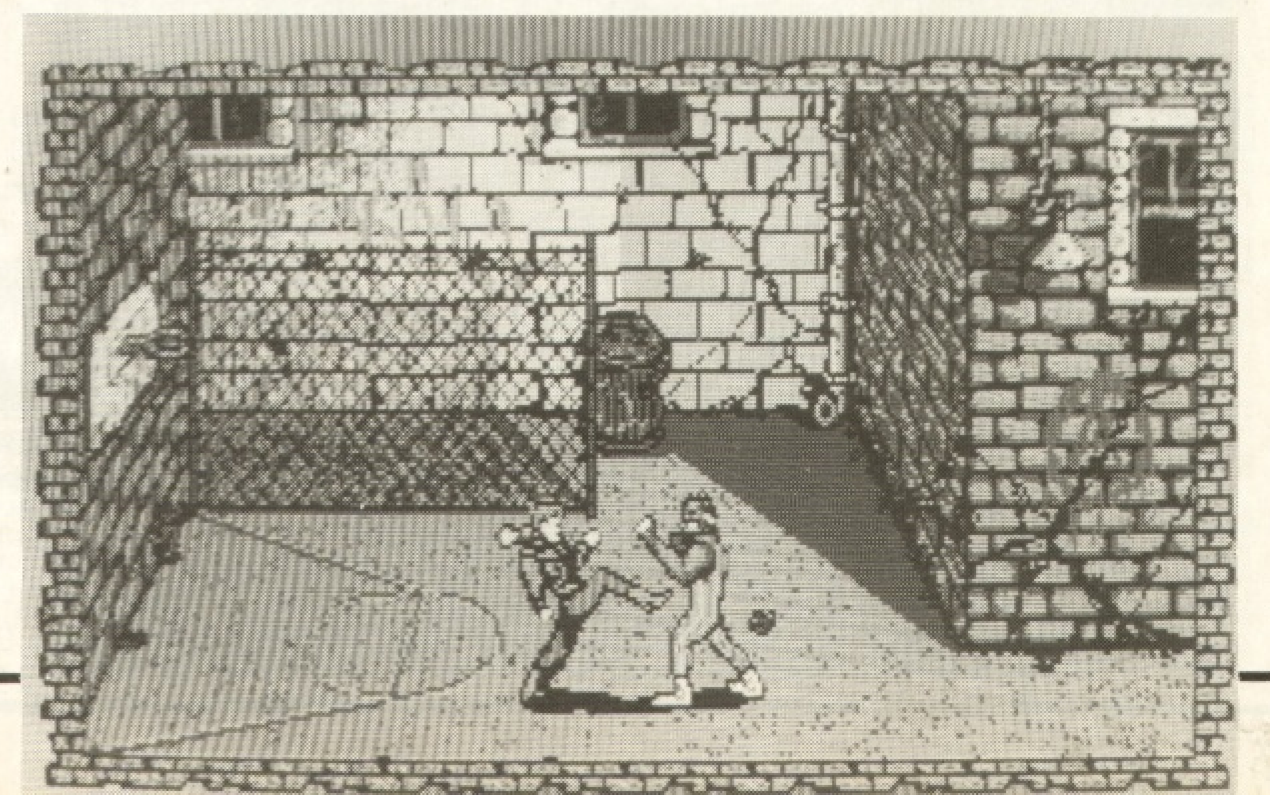


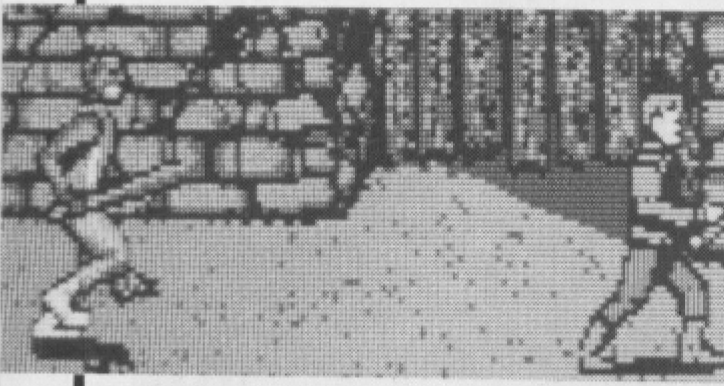
Manhattan Dealers is not the first attempt to mix a basic fighting game with a little extra storyline and some changing backgrounds. In fact, a less kind person than myself might say that the plot owed more than a little to **Renegade** and **Street Fighter**.

Here's the idea: you're a police agent, skilled in all of those martial arts moves that can be expressed by 16 joystick and fire button combinations. Your task, which changes slightly from level to level is to clean up the streets of Harlem. More specifically, you must defeat a series of violent gang members, recover their drugs and avoid the traps they lay.

A level contains several screens, each of them suitably rough and slum-

A is completed by punching or kicking the lights out of every bad guy (or girl) and collecting their drugs. The blurb makes a lot of noise about 'strategy', but apart from looking around for exits, the only thing that this game demands is a strong hand and quick reactions.

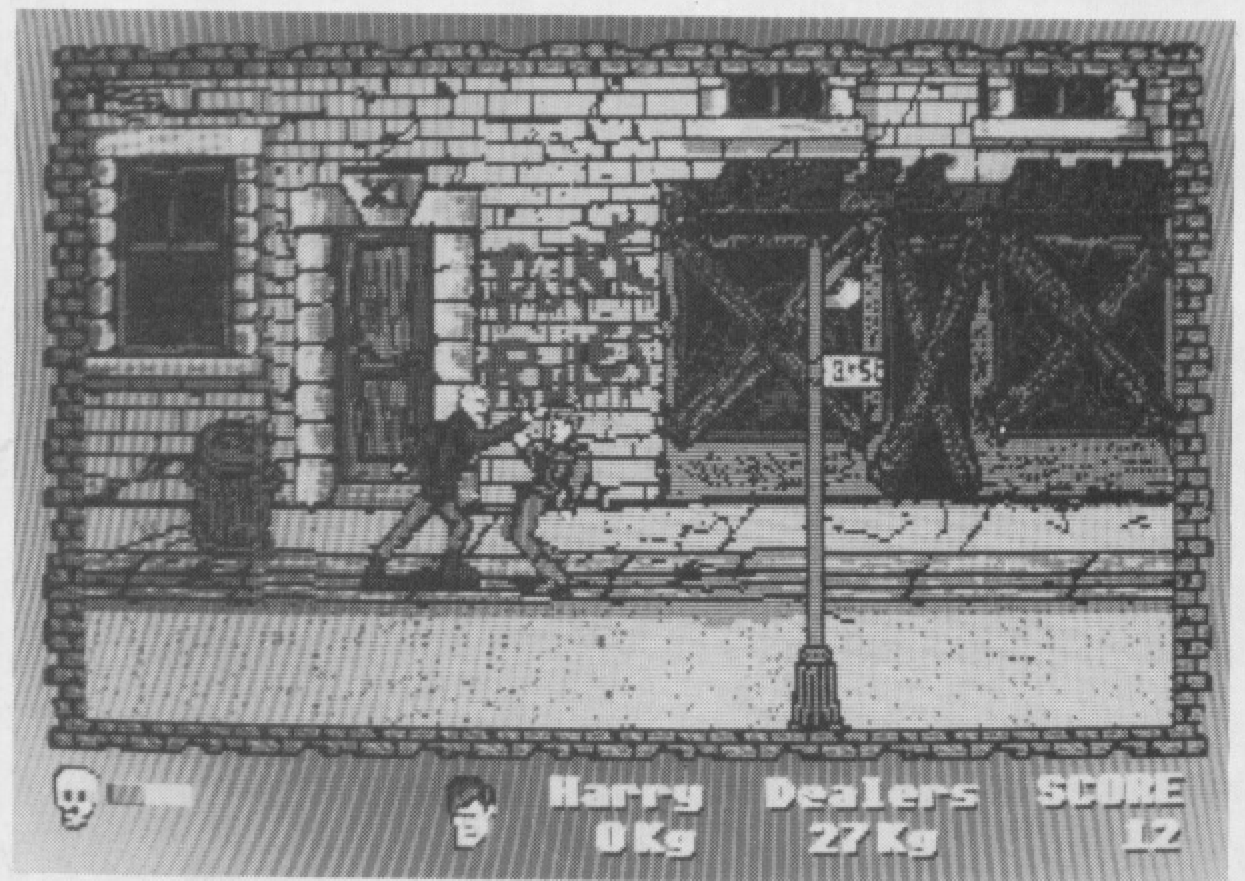




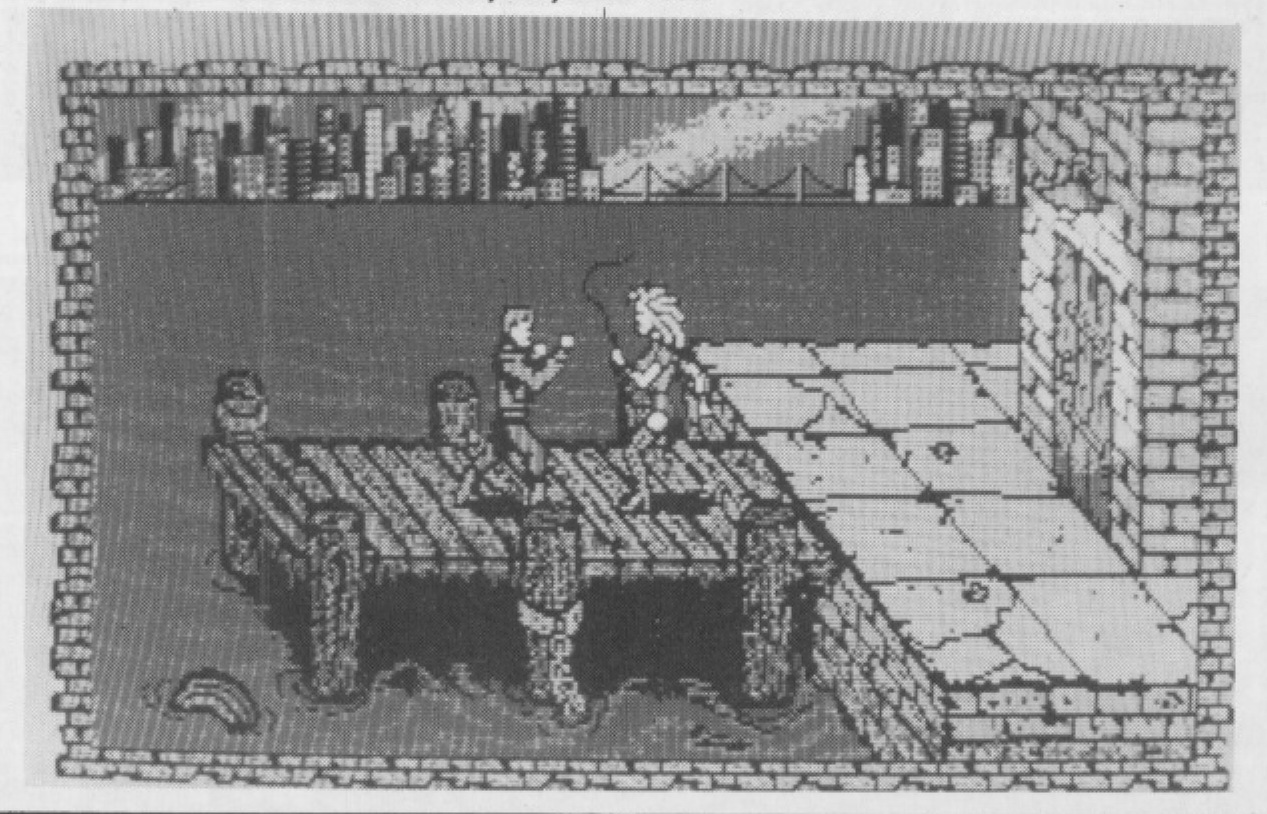
like. Most screens present at least one new adversary – some have even more. It's not actually necessary to defeat each new villain, but it certainly eases progress if you do.

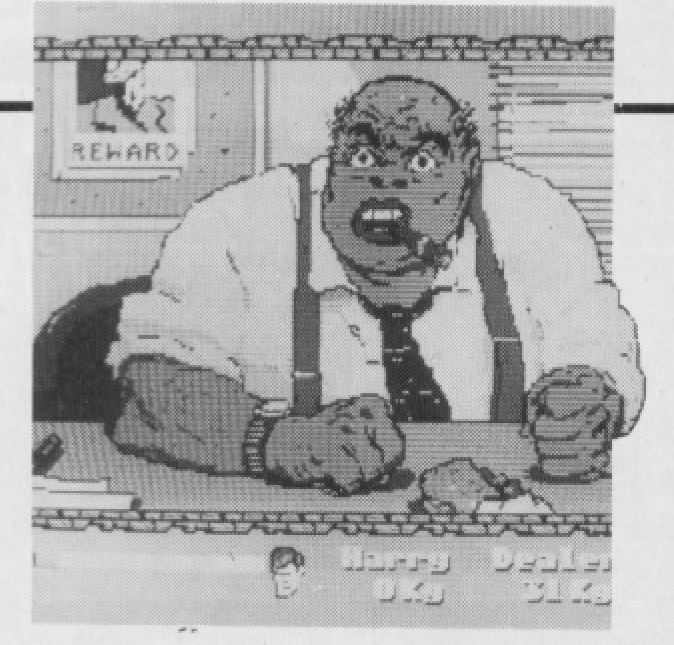
The hero moves freely from left to right and into and out of each scene, but there is no scrolling between – it's one of those 'wait for the next screen to load from disk' affairs I'm afraid.

Characters are controlled by either keyboard or joystick, and – though I wouldn't like to say how much damage it would take – you may find the keyboard option a little more effective.



Options include a 'go to the next level' facility, which would be welcome except that the levels don't really vary that much.





Having completed a level, the local police chief briefs you on your next mission.

ST

Though the blurb describes the graphics as remarkable, they're actually remarkably average. Sure, the character detail is rather impressive, but the animated figures are relatively small. I found the control system difficult (not for the first time in this type of game), mostly because of the subtle distinction between, say, 'lift' and 'left diagonally up'. Sometimes my character just stood there taking a pasting, while it seemed to take an age to turn him. The sound is also a little mixed: the central tune is pretty dull, but the 'aaarrghs' and 'eerrks' during the fights are some of the best ST samples I've heard in ages. Everything hangs together well enough, but don't let the plot fool you, this is only another martial arts game and shouldn't be viewed as anything else.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	68%
SOUND	72%
PLAYABILITY	64%
VALUE	60%

OVERALL 62%



The usual improvements and enhancement apply here, with sharper graphics and clearer samples being the most striking differences. Another major difference however is the price, as the Commodore version weighs in at a hefty £24.99.



IBM compatible owners have a couple of extra rooms to look forward to, but otherwise the game should be a close approximation of the Atari version (minus the samples). Once again PC owners will have to fork out an extra fiver.

TIPS

It's all very well knowing which games are worthy of your undivided attention, but there comes a time when someone, somewhere needs to know more than just how well they play. "How do I get past...?" "What do I do when...?" These are typical pleas for help. Can your conscience take any more? If you happen to have stumbled across any useful cheat modes, clever tactics or original listings which could bring hand relief to frustrated games players, or you just happen to be Plain cocky and can provide general hints for any game available, why not play the Good Samaritan and share your knowledge? Send anything remotely worthwhile to TIPS, The One, Priority Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON EC1R 3AU. And just to make it worth your while there's software up for grabs for the sender of the best original tips we print each month.

PETER BEARDSLEY'S SOCCER

Grandslam

While in possession of the ball, continuously tap the fire button as you run which prevents any other players from being able to tackle you! Good, eh?

ELIMINATOR

Hewson

Ooops! Last month we missed out a couple of codes for John Phillip's superlative shoot 'em up. The ones we missed were for Level Seven (FLIPME), Level Ten (ICICLE) and Level Twelve (KIKONG).

GIGANOID

Microdeal

While on the 'select player' screen, tap the Caps Lock key and start the game as normal. You'll then be greeted with a weird message that seems to have been ripped off from War Games, before you can go on to play the game with 100 lives.



SORCERY PLUS

Virgin

Virgin's rather tired 16-bit incarnation of the ancient Amstrad classic can be made considerably easier by typing GAS MASK WHEELER WANTS CHEAT (including the spaces), rendering you invincible as well as opening all the locked doors and stopping the timer. Well, ain't that just dandy.

SDI

Activision

Cheat modes seem to be getting harder to activate every day, with this one being one of the weirdest to date. On the playable high-score table, shoot down all the swirling pods with your lasers, allowing you to enter your name. Type in ALERIC and the cheat mode is up and running, allowing you to select any level you want with the function keys.

SUPER HANG-ON

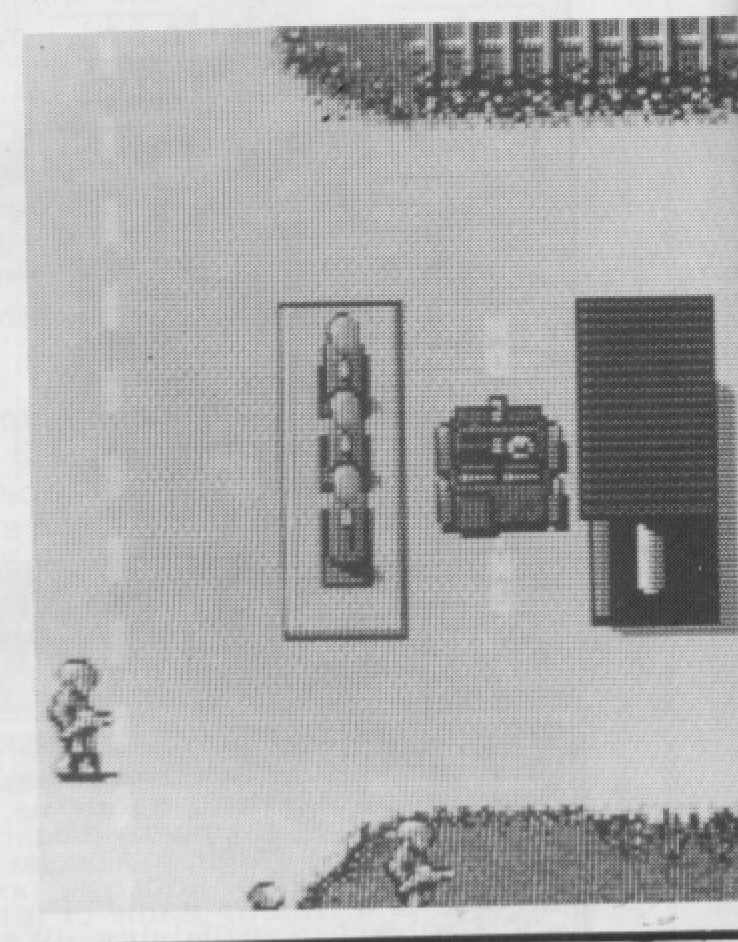
Electric Dreams

The boys from Electric Dreams have been kind enough to supply us with a cheat for their superlative race game. On the high-score table enter 207L, which should then be replaced by a row of dots (indicating that there's cheating afoot). When the next screen appears, press CTRL, ALT, Z and T to get the cheat mode running, allowing you to change the strength of the centrifugal force (what a strange cheat!). Zero will allow you to whip around the course at top speed without crashing at all, while the higher numbers will more than likely send you off the course at every bend.

NEBULUS

Hewson

While on the title screen, type in HELLOIAMJMP (no spaces) to activate the cheat mode, awarding you infinite Pogos. Not only that, but you can also press keys F1 to F8 to access any of the towers. Thanks to the man himself, John Phillips for that one.





Rocket Ranger

Now that you've finally got your hands on the Cinemaware masterpiece, how on earth do you reach the moon? Ciarán Brennan wipes his goggles and prepares to help his fellow Rangers reach for the stars.



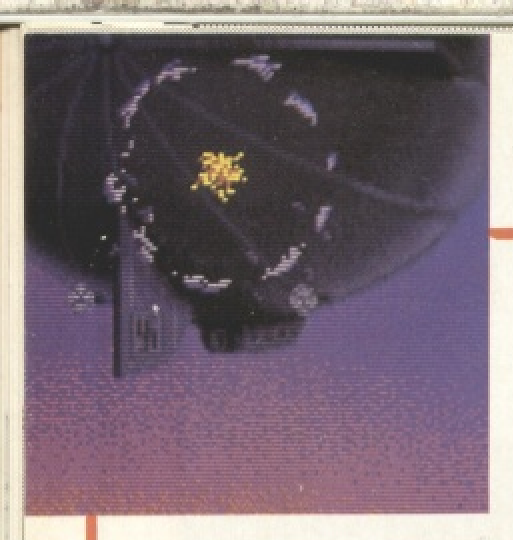
Despite its six-year timespan, Rocket Ranger depends a great deal on speed. This may seem odd for a game that takes over an hour to complete, but even a couple of slip-ups are enough to mean the difference between Nazi dominance and living happily ever after. With this in mind, it's a good idea to attack as many enemy installations as possible throughout the game – thus reducing Nazi efficiency and effectively buying a little more time.

There is no quick way to win Rocket Ranger, a great deal of trial and error is necessary to master all of the sub-games. However, these hints should give the player a good start and eventually aid in the building of a rocket. After that you're on your own... what do you want us to do, play it for you?

IN THE BEGINNING

Before haring off after the Zeppelin, there's only enough time to carry out one action – use this to place your undercover boys in the optimum positions. A random placing of three agents in Africa and two in South America usually yields something of value when you eventually return to the War Room.





GOING UP...

Synchronise your keypresses visually, rather than with the sound of RR's footsteps – remember that light travels quicker than sound! Never try to take off with more than 150 units of Lunarium in the tank, as the extra weight tends to make take-off impossible. If you need more fuel than this to complete a mission, see if it can be undertaken in two parts... or, better still, fly to a Nazi Lunarium base along the way to fill up.

BALLOON BASHING

The Zeppelin fight is split into three stages: in the first, the Zeppelin is far enough away for safety, in the second and third however it's all too easy to destroy. To avoid igniting the airship's flammable gas, stay below the gondola and gradually move upwards until it is just about in range. Only shoot off two bullets at a time, as any strays can bring an untimely end to your mission of mercy.

ALL ABOARD THE ZEPPELIN

Jane and the Doctor don't recognise you at first, so play it cool. Try to use your sense of humour and don't give any direct orders (for instance, never demand to be allowed to take the controls). The Nazis make two attempts to kidnap the Barnstorffs, but second time around Jane recognises you so the going is a little easier – but they still don't take too kindly to being pushed around.

JUNGLE CAPERS

Stay low and in the middle to begin with, then wipe out one side at a time, as moving from side to side is fraught with danger. There's only a couple of seconds between the time that the window opens and the gun commences firing, so wait until the gunfire has passed and use that time to align your shot.

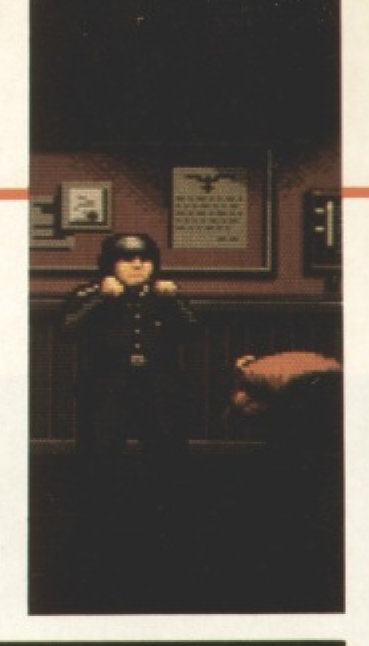
FLYING TONIGHT

Avoid the flak and destroy the bases by shooting slightly in front of them. The Lunarium then forms a pool on the ground and BOOOOM! Another blow for freedom and the American way.

GETTING GOERING

Stay low and slightly to one side (avoid the direct centre, as the Nazis often attack from exactly this point). Never travel across the fighters' direct line of fire, and make good use of the short time between their appearance and their first volleys. By the way, it's a good idea to study the text screen before a dogfight, as this will reveal whether the squadron is of normal ability or one of the more trecherous 'crack' divisions.





FURIOUS FISTICUFFS

The first couple of guards are fairly soft and should be used to practice your boxing technique. From the third guard onwards however, things get a little trickier. Keep your guard up as the Nazi rains you with punches, then throw a few quick blows to his unprotected parts. Best of luck with the fifth guard – you'll need it!



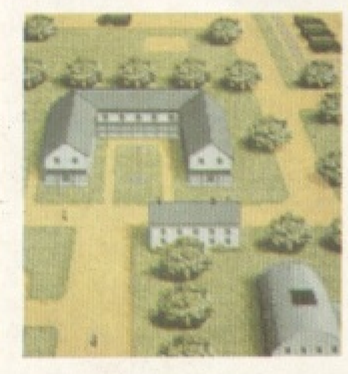


WARGAMES

Always read your agents' reports thoroughly, as there's often a geographical clue hidden somewhere within. Unless an agent discovers a Lunarium base, move him immediately after his first report. If a base is discovered, change orders to 'Organise Resistance' and leave the agent in place until the end of the game as he will then send back a constant Lunarium supply. NEVER place an agent in a high risk situation, as this invariably results in capture.









IN GENERAL

If Leermeister gets his hands on three of your agents, it's best to call it quits and start again. Should you find yourself deep into 1944 and still nowhere near completing the rocket, once again it may be a good idea to do the honourable thing. Oh, and by the way, keep an eye out for a couple of surprise visitors during RR's takeoff sequence.



WARHAWK

Firebird

Immediately after loading, press F3, which should produce a blue blob on the screen when the game gets underway. Collect it and you'll be awarded with infinite power!

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

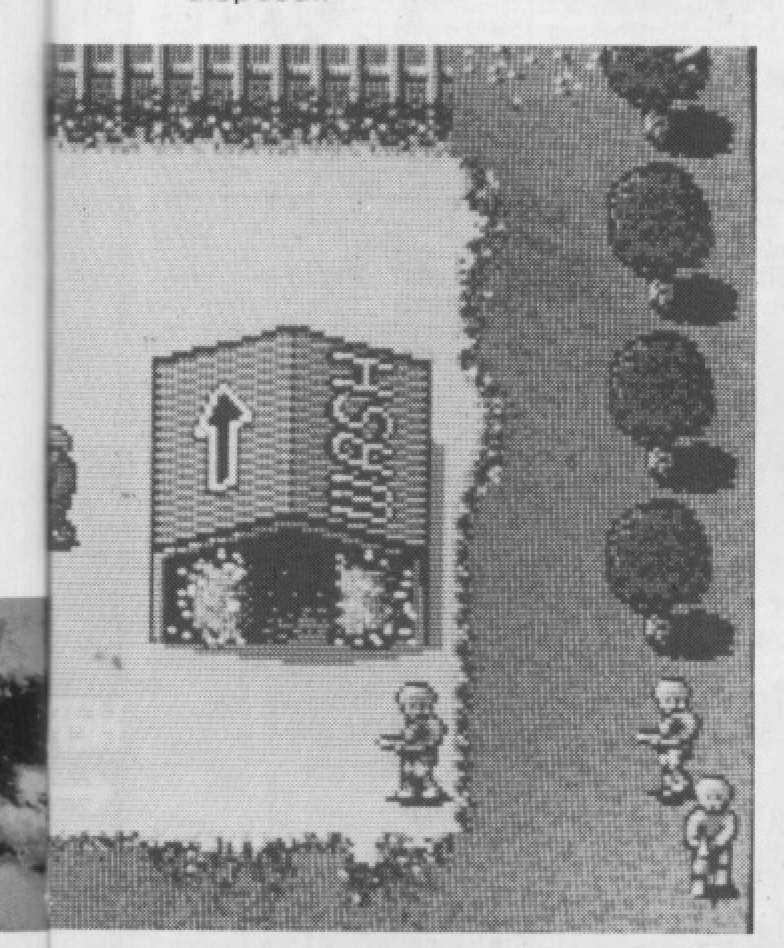
Domark

For a little help in defeating the Galactic Empire, hold down the HELP key and type in XIFARGROTCEV (Vectorgrafix backwards don't you know) while on the title screen, for infinite shields. There's also the less-useful but still entertaining option of holding down certain keys such as L, C or D to obtain natty pictures of Luke, Threepio or Vader.

FERNANDEZ MUST DIE

Image Works

Pause the game and type in SPINYNORMAN (Obviously programmed by Monty Python fans) and lo and behold you've got infinite lives at your disposal.



VETERAN

Software Horizons

Those struggling to complete this iffy **Operation Wolf** clone will be pleased to hear that you can advance a level simply by pressing the HELP key. Thanks to Andrew Smith from Canvey Island for that one.

STREET FIGHTER

(Go!)

To progress to the next level of this abominable licensed beat 'em up, type STREET CHEAT on the title screen and press the HELP key. Easy when you know how, eh?



BOMBUZAL

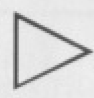
Image Works

Here are some codes for Tony Crowther and David Bishop's nail bitingly difficult 3D puzzle game.

RATT
ROSS
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THE GREAT GIANA SISTERS

Rainbow Arts



While playing, hold down the keys A, R, M, I and N to skip to the next level.

STARRAY

Logotron

Unfortunately the cheat mode isn't as straightforward as the gameplay. Here's the step-by-step buide to getting an invincible ship. Make sure your mouse is plugged in, but don't use it to move the highlight. Thanks to Logotron for their help.

Access the OPTIONS SCREEN (ie: press the SPACE BAR).

Move down to the VIEW GAME SCREEN option.

Push the joystick LEFT and press FIRE. The GAME SCREEN should appear.

Centre the joystick and press FIRE again. The OPTIONS SCREEN should reappear.

Move down to the SOUND ON option.

Push the joystick to the RIGHT and press FIRE. If SOUND ON changes to SOUND OFF, start again from scratch.

Return to the VIEW GAME SCREEN option.

Push the joystick RIGHT and while holding it in this direction, hold down the right MOUSE BUTTON.

Press the LEFT MOUSE BUTTON. The OPTIONS SCREEN should change to CHEAT MODE.

Return to RESUME GAME and continue play with a shield that never depletes.

If this doesn't work, try again from a new game.

TIPS

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Spitting Image




The Domark boys once again demonstrate their ability to grab great licences, but what sort of game can a satirical puppet show generate? Paul Boughton is game for a laugh but finds the chuckles thin on the ground.



Visually stunning. Hystericaly funny. Breathtakingly audacious. Well, that about sums up the **Spitting Image** television show. Now for the computer game.

Armageddon is getting too close for comfort. Everybody's out for power and once they get it, they are not going to let go without a fight. This is where you come in.

Six of the world's top leaders – Gorbachev, in flares; a besuited Thatcher; Superstar The Pope; Ronald Reagan complete with clown's nose (obviously the game was designed without thought to the recent Presidential elections); the Ayatollah, and President "Adolf" Botha – have been singled out as the most likely candidates for world domination. The gameplay is simple: stop them.



Depending on the combination of leaders you pick, you can end up in places such as Downing Street, Rome, Teheran etc. It vaguely reminds me of System 3's International Karate **– an around the world beat 'em up. Here Ronnie and the Pope face off in front of the president's favourite eaterie.**



The fighting scenes take the form of a traditional martial arts game. A combination of joystick moves combined with pressing the fire button allows jumping, ducking and hitting at the head, body or feet. There's nothing so adventurous as a flying kick, though.



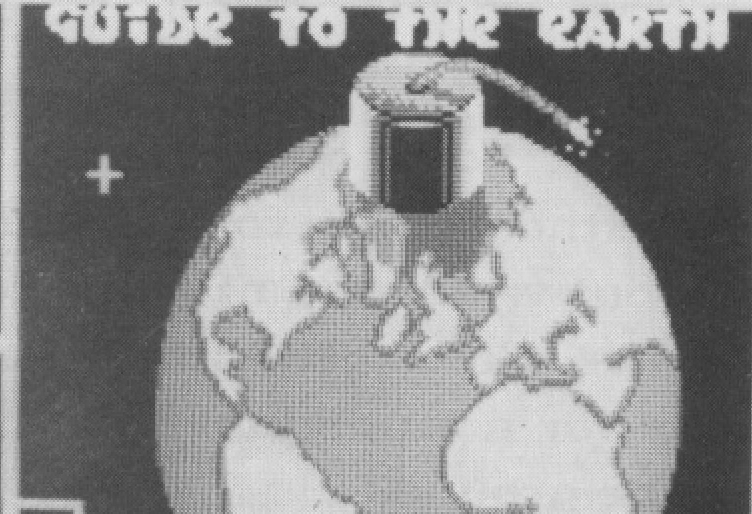










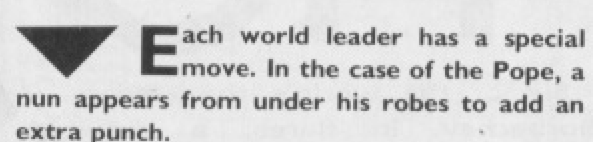






Here the world is depicted as a time bomb with the fuse already burning (Heavy satire, don't you think?). The six world leaders are arranged around the screen, represented as they appear in the television programme. The idea is to destroy their credibility by getting them to beat each other up. First you select one leader and then another. The first is the target leader, the one which you must beat up by controlling the second. Once the choice is made, you're instantly transported to the 'target's' home ground.





Each world leader has a special move. In the case of the Pope, a nun appears from under his robes to add an extra punch.

You triumph by winning the best of five fights. In that case the leader has lost all credibility and is beaten. When you return to the map screen the beaten leader is shown as a skull. You then select another two leaders and the whole process is repeated.

ST

Spitting Image has turned out to be a poor punch-up with silly faces, even though those faces are fairly accurate representations of the show's puppets – and that for me is a missed opportunity. There are attempts at humour, but nothing remotely funny. As the essence of the television programme is vicious humour, satire and parody, surely here was a chance to have a game which was deliberately funny. The only thing the game and programme have in common is a name and the title music. Domark has produced accurate conversions in the past (Trivial Pursuit), but all we have here is another lost opportunity.

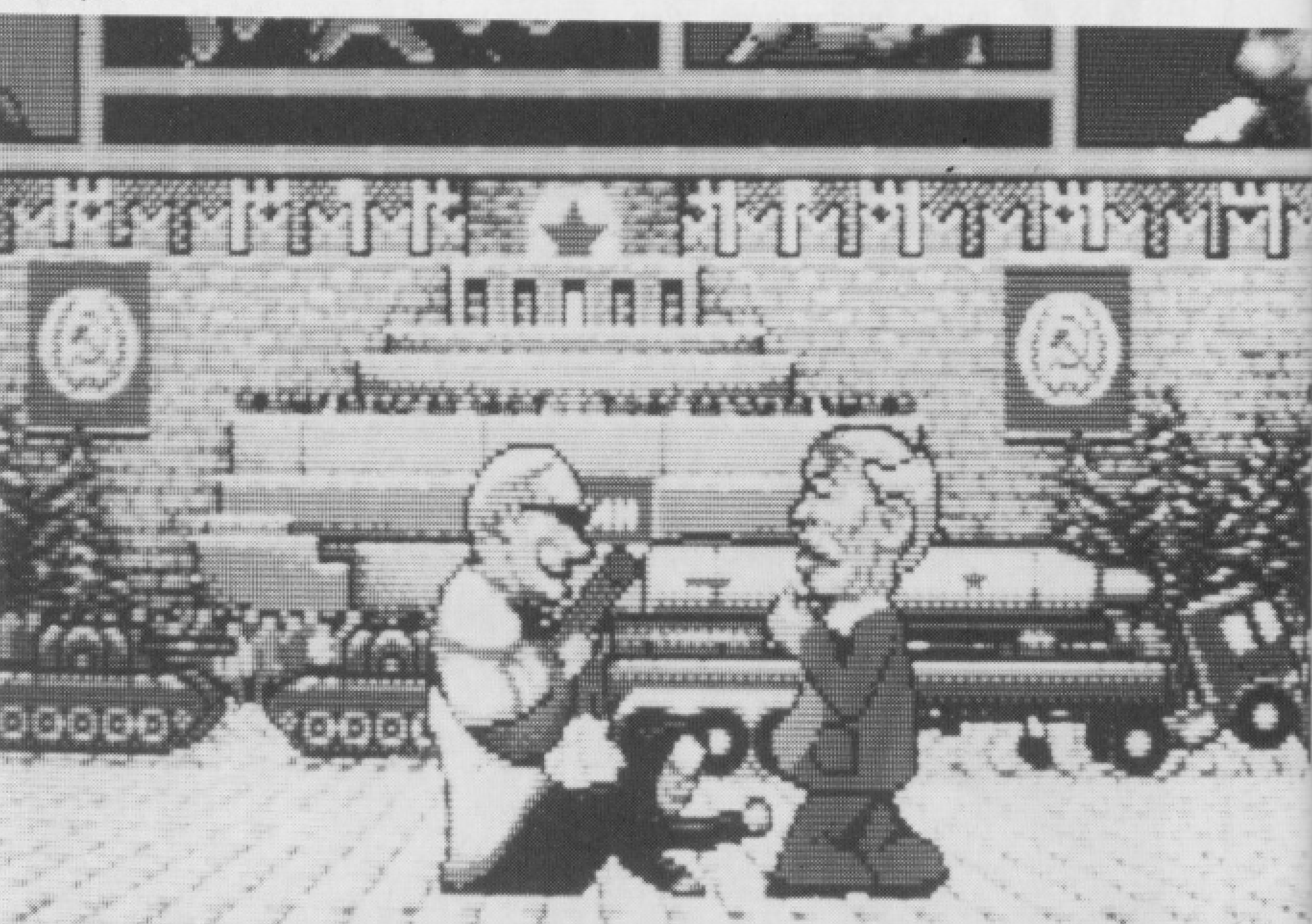
PRICE	£19.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	61%
SOUND	49%
PLAYABILITY	32%
VALUE	30%
OVERALL	**34%**



A

There's little to separate this version and its Atari cousin, other than the clearer rendition of the theme tune and spot effects.

PRICE	£19.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	61%
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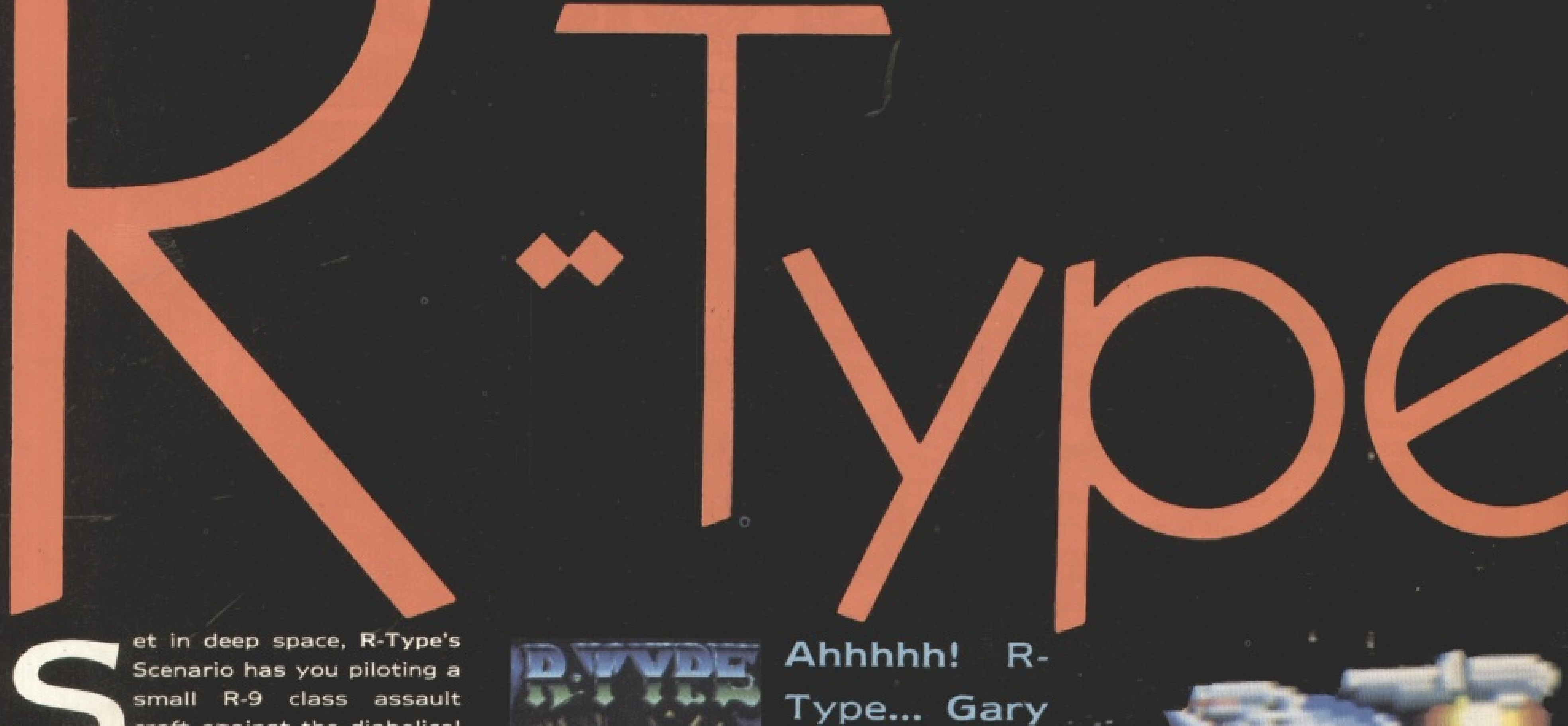
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R-Type



Ahhhhh! R-Type... Gary Whitta gets progressively harder with Electric Dreams' conversion of Irem's classic coin-op.

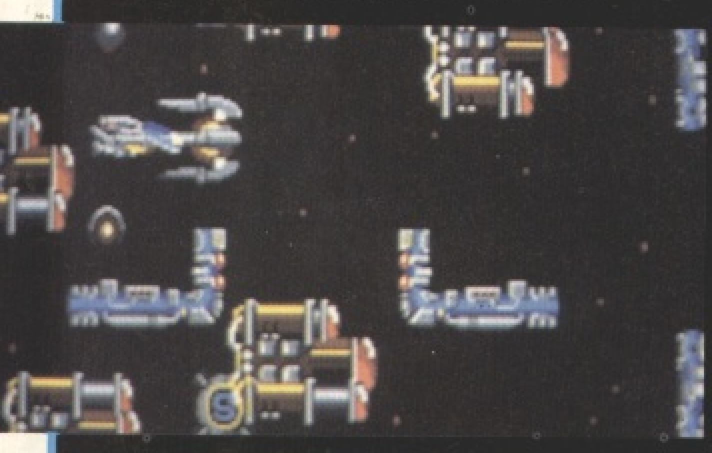
Set in deep space, **R-Type's** Scenario has you piloting a small R-9 class assault craft against the diabolical might of the Bydo empire. Ever since the days of **Scramble**, one of the first left to right scrollers, games of this type have usually put the player up against swarms and swarms of advancing aliens with ships for brains. But **R-Type** is one of the first to feature 'living' scenery and psuedo intelligent alien attack patterns.

R-Type's other innovation is the craft's four-stage beam weapon — holding down the fire button builds up the beam's power, and depending on when the button is released, one of four strengths of beam is unleashed.

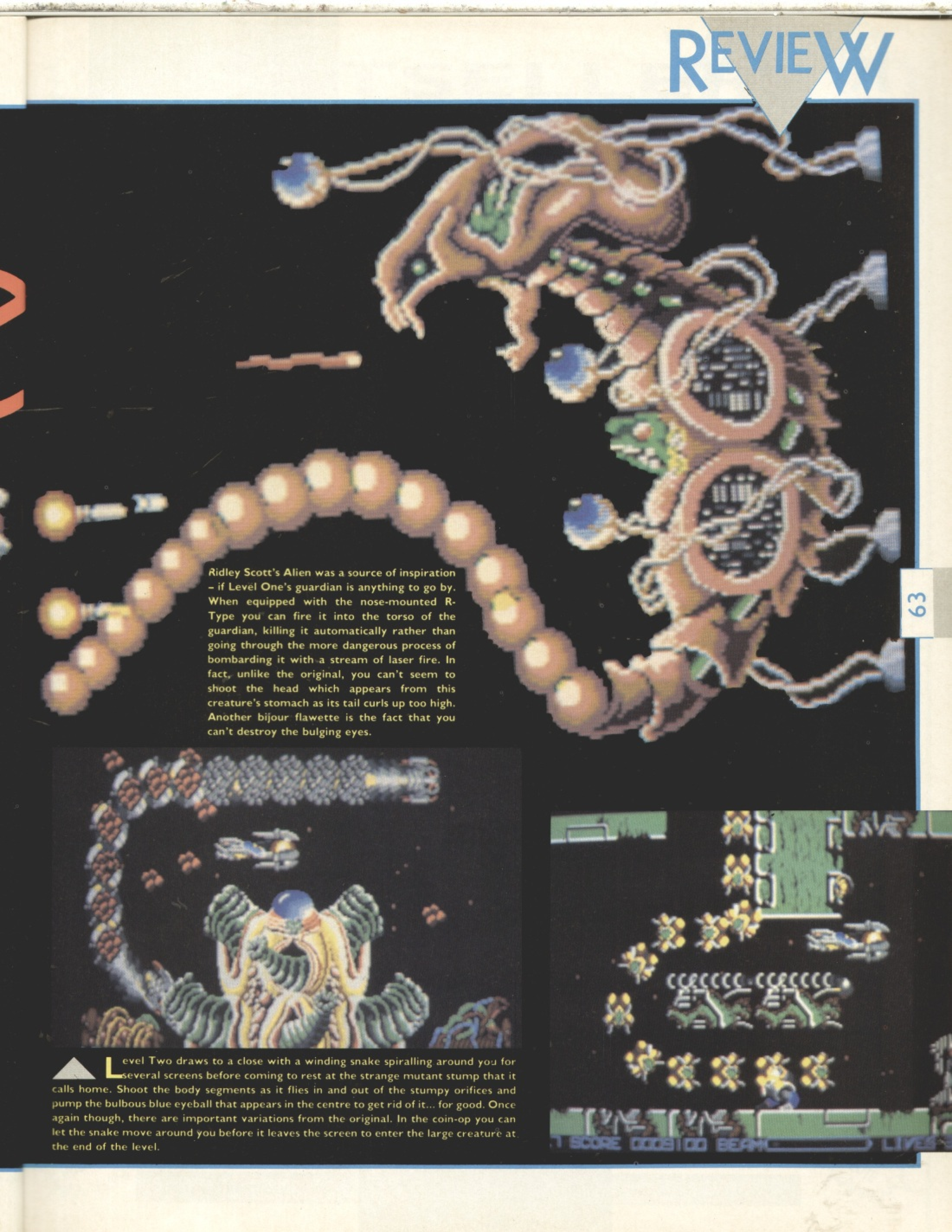
But probably the greatest feature of the coin-op is the ship's unique expansion capability which allows the basic craft to be upgraded to an almost invincible fighting machine by the collection of extra weapons and power. Apart from the more traditional speed-ups and lasers, the R-9 can take advantage of reflective lasers, helix lasers, defence drones and an all-powerful R-Type nose cone which acts in both offensive and defensive modes.



The R-Type and orbital are sufficient equipment to deal with the onslaught of biological beings on Level Two. Scorpion-like creatures crawl from the undergrowth, although they don't flash when hit to indicate their presence as in the coin-op.



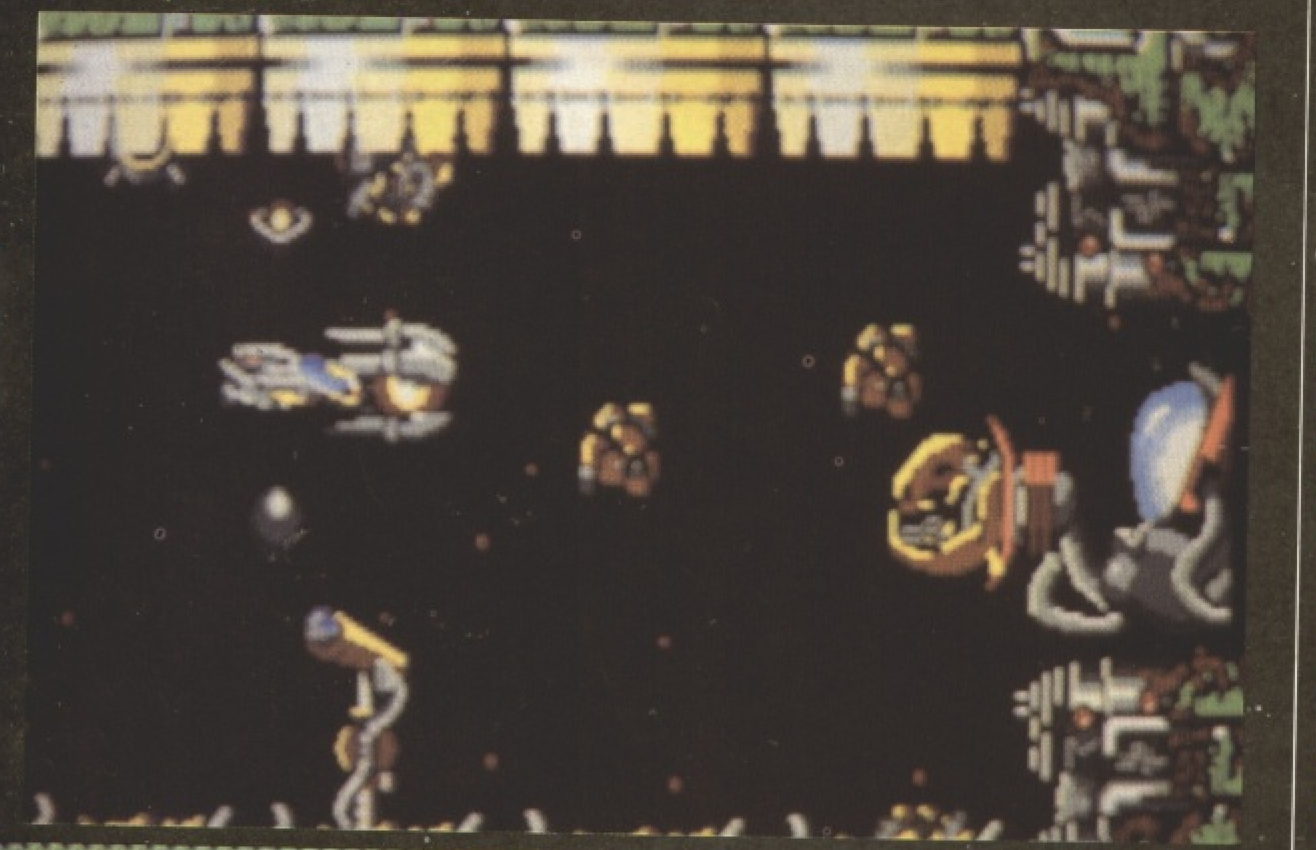




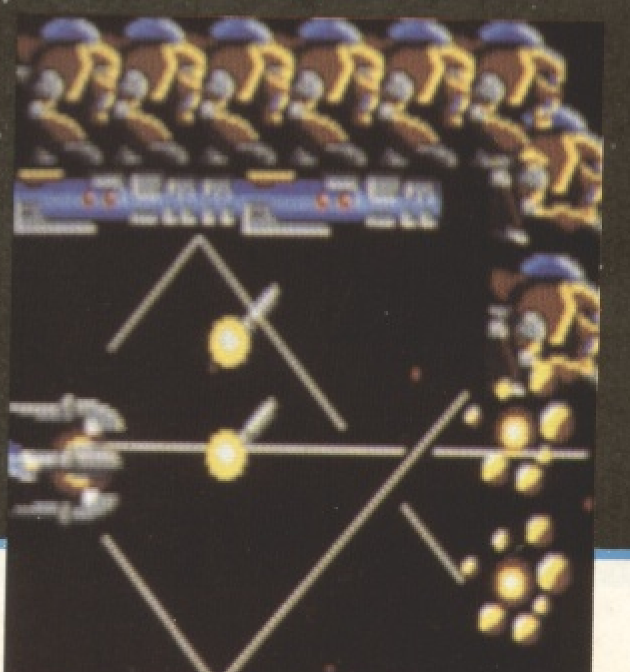
Ridley Scott's Alien was a source of inspiration – if Level One's guardian is anything to go by. When equipped with the nose-mounted R-Type you can fire it into the torso of the guardian, killing it automatically rather than going through the more dangerous process of bombarding it with a stream of laser fire. In fact, unlike the original, you can't seem to shoot the head which appears from this creature's stomach as its tail curls up too high. Another bijour flawette is the fact that you can't destroy the bulging eyes.

Level Two draws to a close with a winding snake spiralling around you for several screens before coming to rest at the strange mutant stump that it calls home. Shoot the body segments as it flies in and out of the stumpy orifices and pump the bulbous blue eyeball that appears in the centre to get rid of it... for good. Once again though, there are important variations from the original. In the coin-op you can let the snake move around you before it leaves the screen to enter the large creature at the end of the level.

It's a level with a difference, is Level Three. A gargantuan floating spaceship fires jets of hot steam and laser bolts from its generously-positioned gun turrets. There's a set route to follow around this ship, taking out its defences as you progress, with a pulsating gun turret at the rear that represents its last line of defence. Nail that and the skies light up as the whole ship blows.



Remember the snake-like garbage monster that appeared in Star Wars? It makes a cameo appearance in R-Type at the end of Level Seven, as a partner in crime with a mechanical dinosaur whose head departs from its body and floats about the screen after excessive blasting.



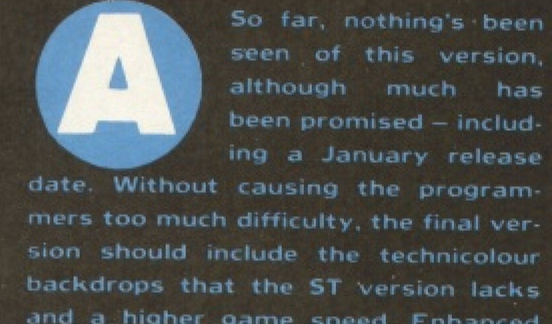
The fourth level is possibly the most difficult to complete. Spideroids patrol the screen in a criss-cross fashion, leaving behind a trail of deadly spawn which can only be cleared with laser fire or a well-timed burst of your ship's beam weapon. Nearer the end of the level the whole screen is taken up by the lethal multiplying eggs.



The success of the coin-op was no doubt down to its goregous graphics and innovative features, such as the beam weapon. And out of all of Activision's recently (and not so recently) acquired licences, this is certainly the most convertable. So why are there so many flaws? The biggest problem, other than the lengthy loading process, is the relative proportions of the graphics. While most of the sprites and scenery have been reproduced with less detail but a fair degree of accuracy, the ship is a little on the large side and as such gameplay is unforgiveably inaccurate in places. These flaws lead me to think that the team that converted R-Type took their lead from a video rather than from the game itself. The fact that the action isn't particularly fluid is easily forgotten when you try out your favourite tactic only to find it fails, dismally. R-Type narrowly misses the mark where conversion accuracy is concerned. But R-Type does succeed in providing a decent blast – in fact, it's possibly the best game of its type available for the ST... but that's only because the competition isn't up to much.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	68%
SOUND	64%
PLAYABILITY	67%
VALUE	66%

OVERALL 70%



A

So far, nothing's been seen of this version, although much has been promised – including a January release date. Without causing the programmers too much difficulty, the final version should include the technicolour backdrops that the ST version lacks and a higher game speed. Enhanced sound is also a likelihood.

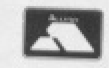
AMIGA OUTRUN

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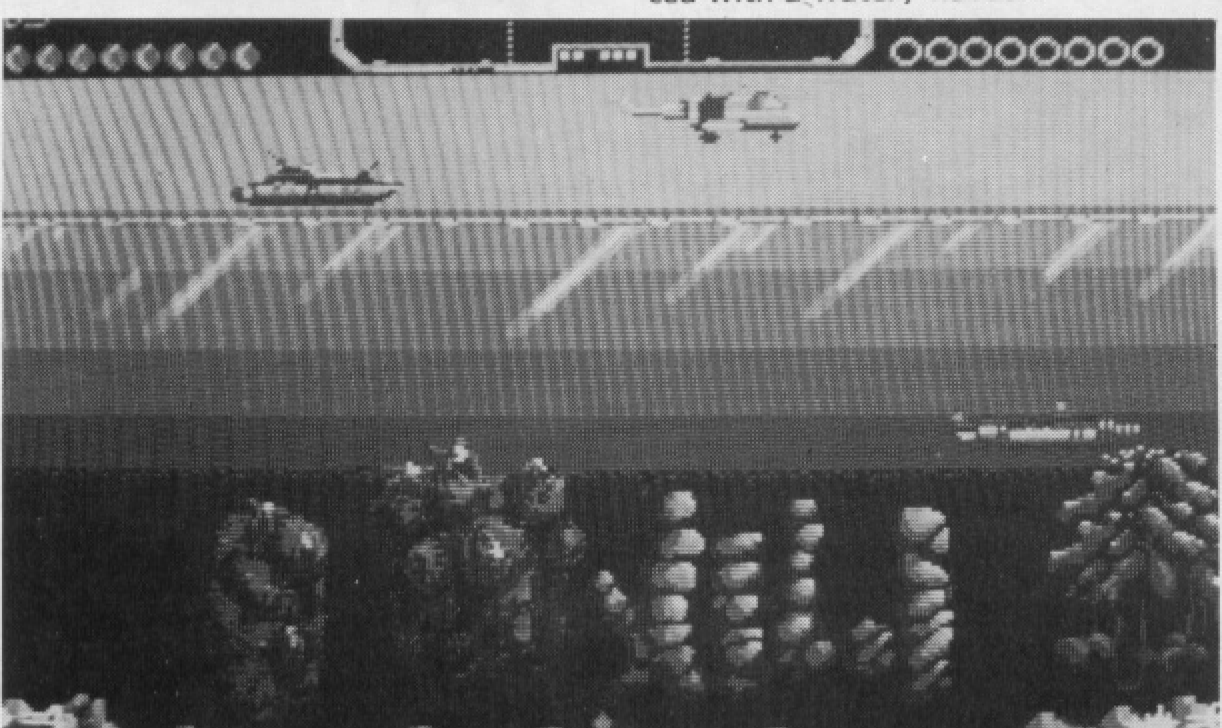
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This US Gold licence isn't based on the famous Peter Benchley novel or its uninspired film spin-off, but the latest coin-op from little known Woodplace. Gary Whitta takes the plunge.

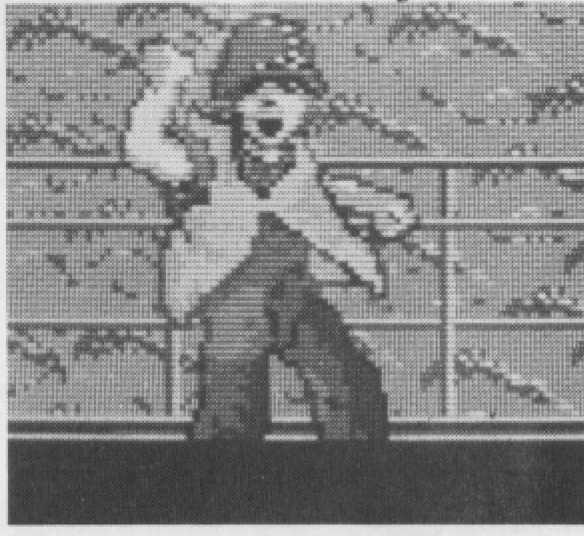
The Deep



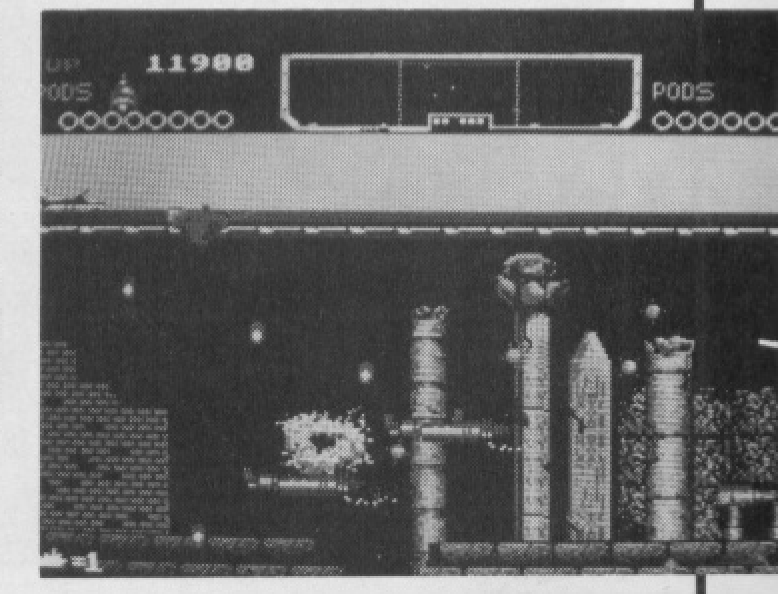
Dangerous aquatic exploration is the name of the game in **The Deep**, and not the leisurely pleasure boating that the cover artwork may suggest. Converted from the newly-released coin-op of the same name (the time difference between coin-op and conversion releases is getting shorter all the time), **The Deep** is a mish-mash of several ageing game formats, reproduced with a watery flavour.

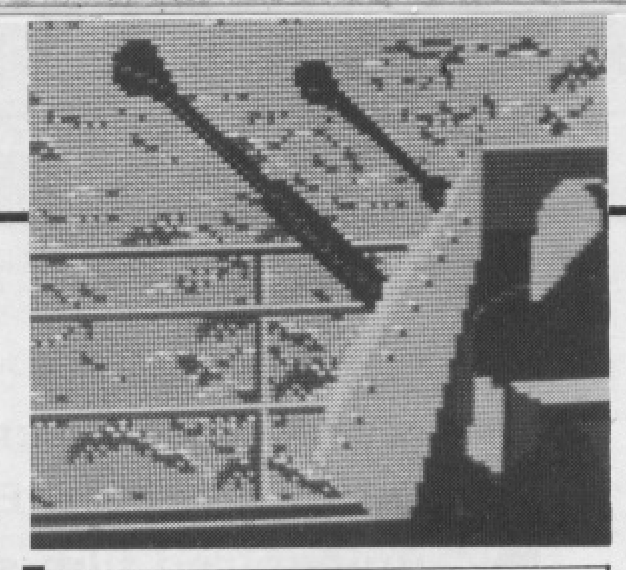


The first piece of treasure (glowing blob) is found halfway through Section One. Shoot the right kind of enemy and an 'A' capsule is launched, causing a helicopter to appear and bestow a special power on you. Now you can transform into a mini-sub and venture under the water Thrust**-style to collect the treasure.**

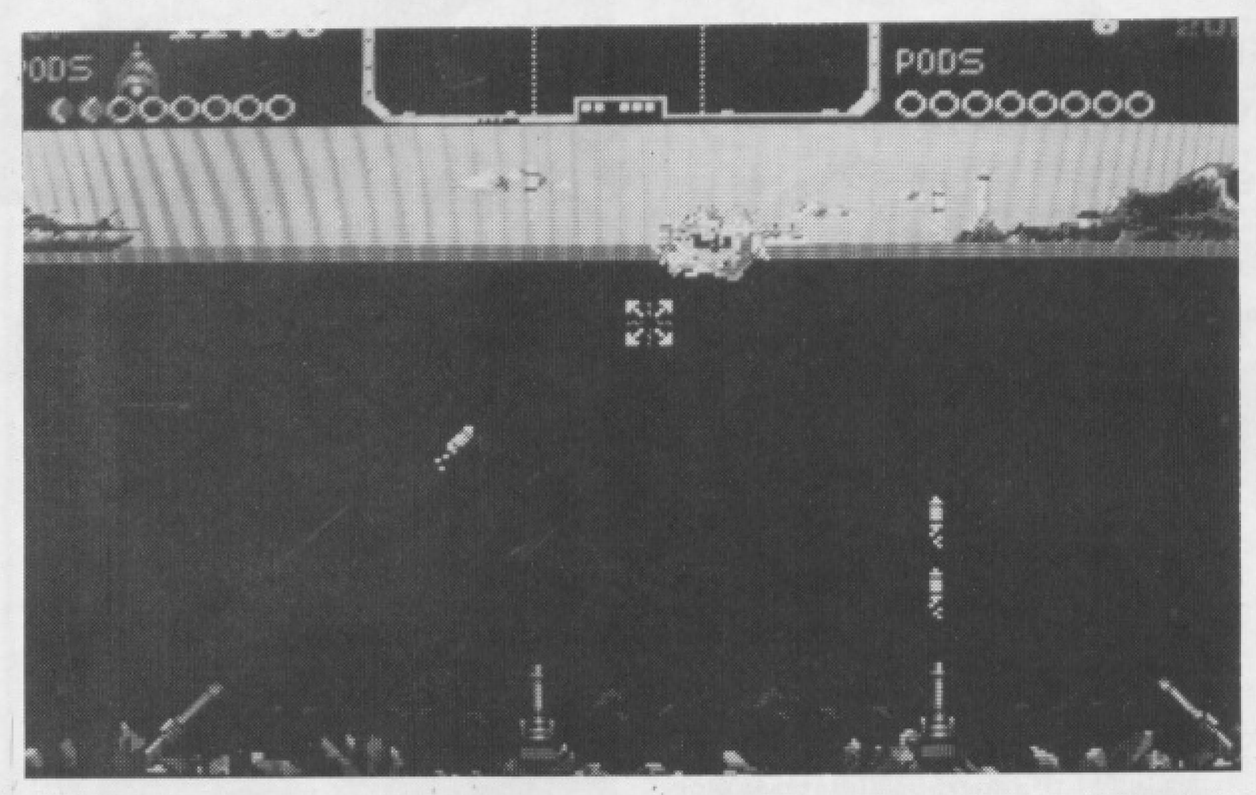


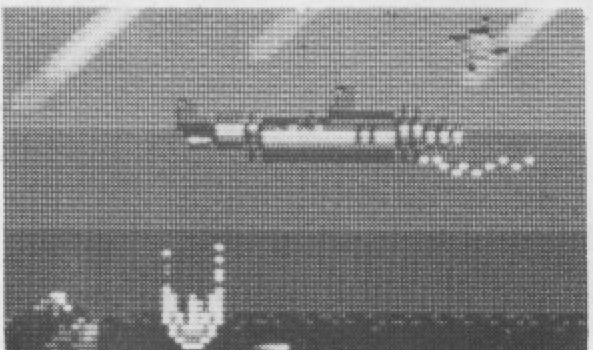
Those old enough to remember Scramble **and other games of the ilk are likely to experience *deja vu* while playing the first section. This time round however, only left-right movement over the waves is allowed as your boat patrols hostile waters in search of treasure. As well as enemy boats and patrol craft, there are plenty of aquatic creatures who don't take kindly to your presence. Thankfully they can all be disposed of with a well-timed depth charge.**

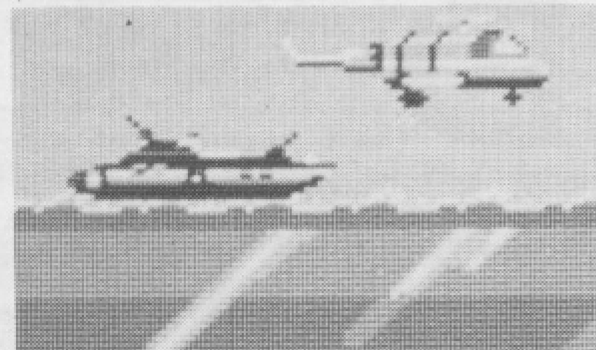




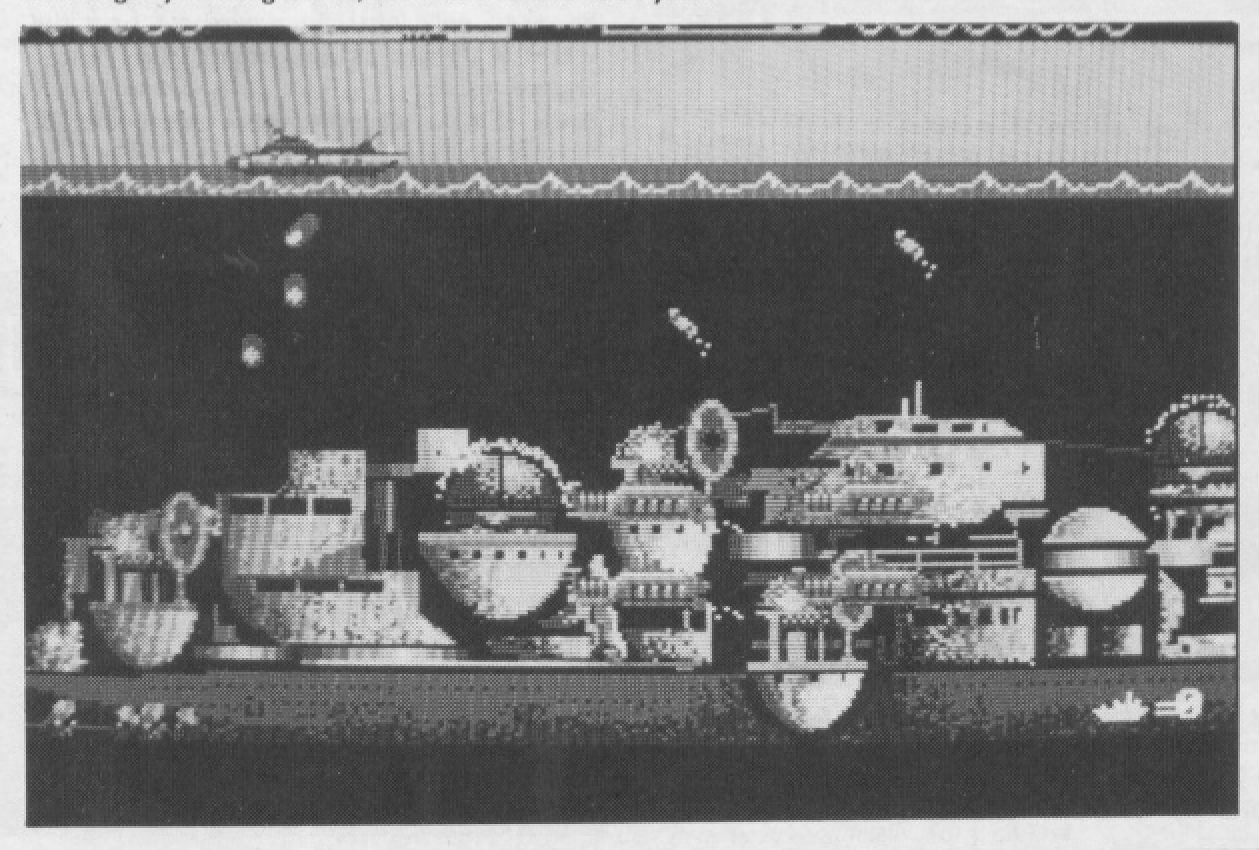
Another blast from the past on Level Four, this time it's Missile Command that's exhumed and re-animated. Protect the boats that chug from right to left across the screen by knocking out the enemy's missiles with a target cursor and... well, that's about it really.







Slight shades of R-Type present here as a leviathan nuclear submarine appears on the Level Three firing cruise missiles at you with gay abandon. It can only be destroyed with repeated depth charge strikes to its vulnerable parts and you have to be quick about it too – the longer you hang about, the more it throws at you.



ST

The Deep only ever attempts to tread water, but ends up spluttering and calling for help. When all the sections have been completed once, things get repetitive and there's little compulsion to carry on. To be fair, the Missile Command section is quite fun, but after a while even that becomes more of a chore than a joy to play. Aesthetically, there's little to impress, with almost no sound, and a bubbly but far from engrossing title-screen tune. The constant need to reload most of the program after every game is also irritating. The simultaneous two-player option helps to brighten things up but is badly executed (it's all too easy for one player's boat to get lost behind the other.) A competent conversion of an incompetent coin-op.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Our Now
GRAPHICS	43%
SOUND	31%
PLAYABILITY	58%
VALUE	45%

OVERALL 51%



The marginally faster Amiga version offers enhanced sound, which is technically a lot better, but also serves to annoy greatly. A monotonous sonar 'ping' plays throughout, and the sampled explosions offer little compensation.

PRICE	£24.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	42%
SOUND	30%
PLAYABILITY	58%
VALUE	37%

OVERALL 50%



The PC version is likely to support both CGA and EGA and should be identicial in terms of gameplay to its ST and Amiga counterparts. Expect it to surface in January at the same price as the Amiga incarnation.



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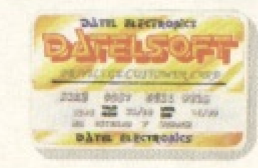
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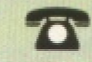
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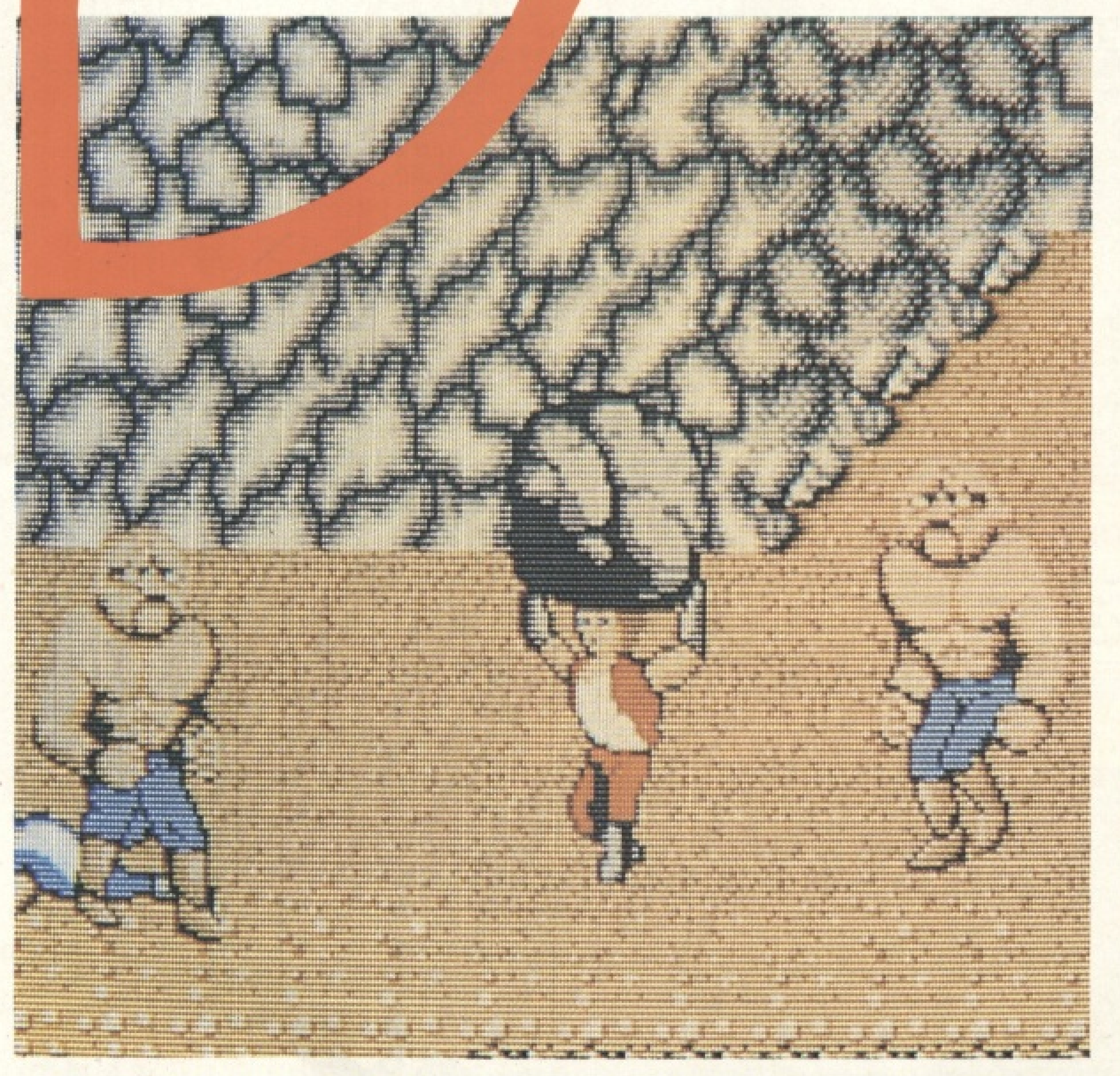
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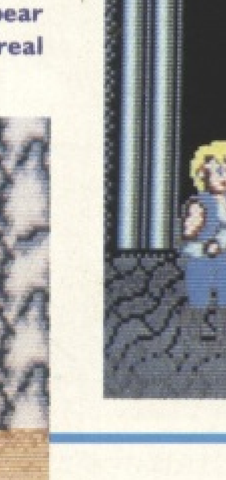


Most regular arcade-goers will need no introduction to **Double Dragon**. Taito's two-player fightin' and fumpin' frolics made the machine the most popular in the country for weeks on end, and it stayed in the Top Five even with the advent of the blockbusting coin-ops that appeared at around the same time.

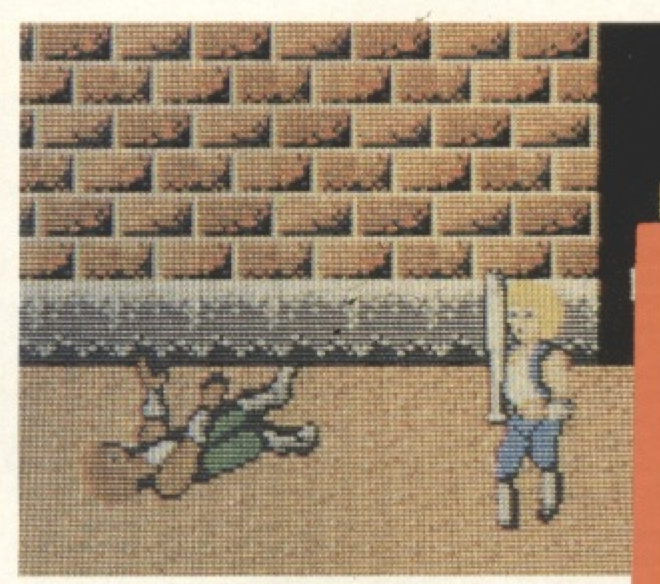
Taking on the role of youthful Kung Fu Master Billy Lee (with another player controlling his twin brother Jimmy in two-player mode), your mission is to rescue your girlfriend from the clutches of an evil street gang. Armed (initially) with just your martial arts skills, you take to the streets, determined to reach the gang's stronghold.

One of the coin-op's features transferred (reasonably) well on this version is the 'interactive' background. You can pick up rocks, oil drums and packing crates and hurl them at your opponents (but be careful not to knock down your brother in the process).

Near the end of each level there's usually a large Karnov-like hardman that requires a hell of a beating before he lays down and dies. On later levels they appear in pairs, and unless you're armed you're in real trouble.





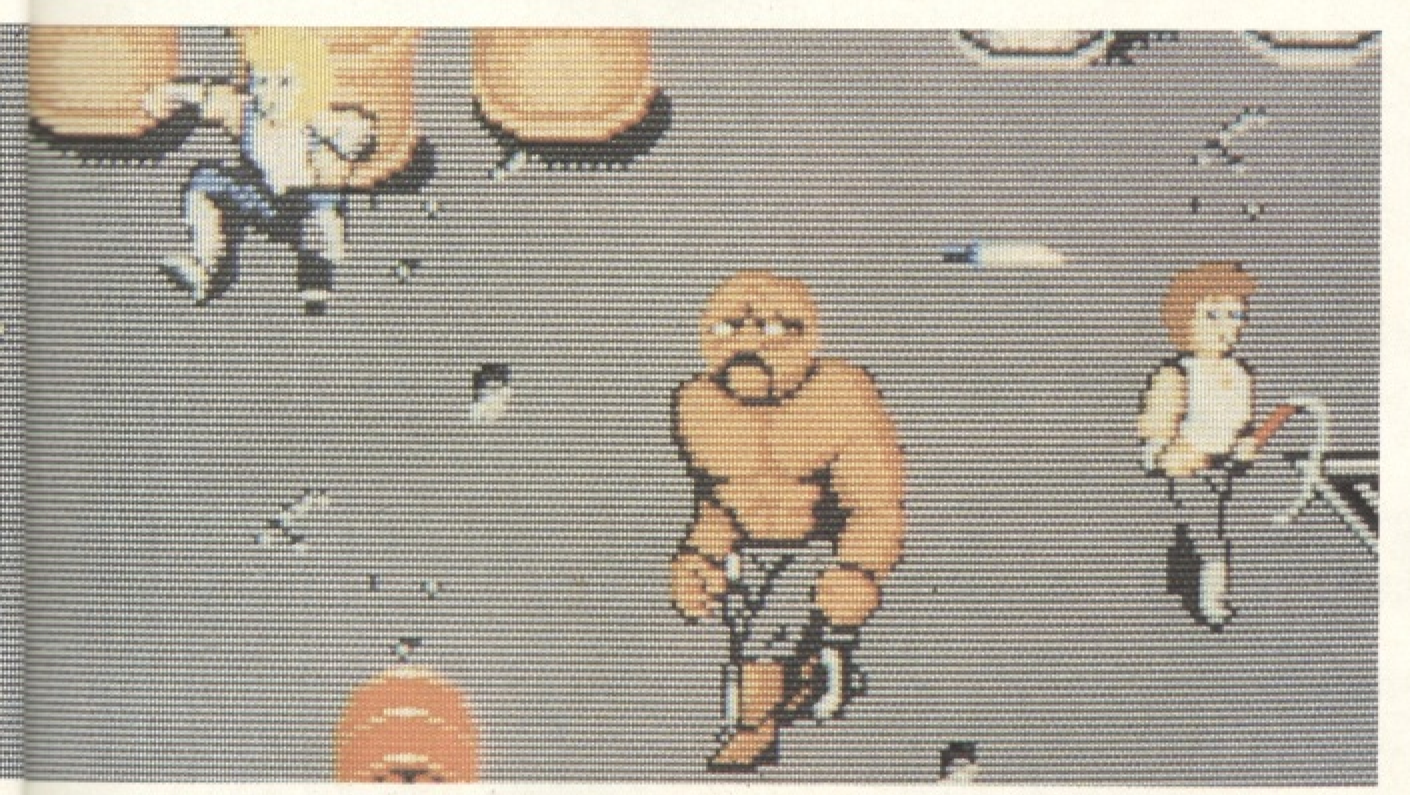


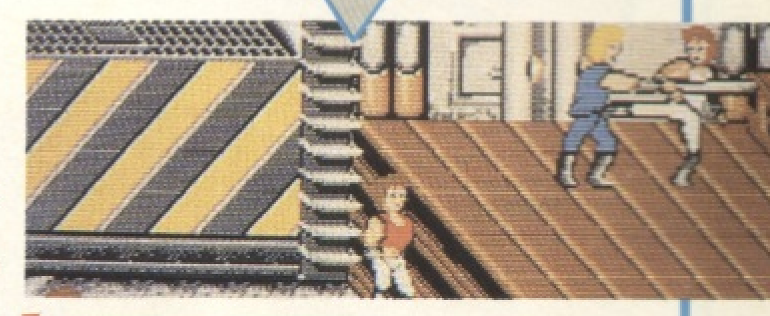
Some of your assailants are armed with whips and baseball bats. Get stuck in and knock them down so you can pick up their weapon and start giving as good as you get. The whip knocks out enemies at a distance, while the baseball bat acts (unlike in the coin-op) as a 'smart bomb' that wipes out almost everyone on the screen when swung. Lethal!

The PC version is surprisingly fast, especially when in four-colour mode. The 16 colour version shown here tends to slow down, but on the whole is a lot faster than its ST stablemate.



Twice the players means twice the fun. Or does it? After playing through Melbourne House's conversion of Taito's beat 'em up, Gary Whitta isn't so sure.





ST

As coin-op conversions go, Double Dragon is sloppy. When converting a game, one of the top priorities should be to ensure that the feel of the original is retained, which hasn't happened here. Graphically it's messy, and for some reason the cardboard sprites don't look as though they belong on the background. Animation is poor, with only three frames being used for walking, which makes Billy and Jimmy mince along (hardly correct for two tough guys!) It's easy to die without knowing why, and gameplay seems to rest on whacking the fire button as fast as you can to deck your opponents before they deck you. All these moans aside, for some reason Double Dragon manages to be quite playable (in a funny sort of way) in its own right, and the final two-player set-to where Billy and Jimmy fight it out for the affections of the shackled girl produced hoots of laughter from the participants. However, as it's in the 'so bad it's almost good' class, I doubt that anyone who splashes out the asking price for it will see the funny side.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	53%
SOUND	56%
PLAYABILITY	60%
VALUE	51%

OVERALL 55%



PC

As mentioned, the PC version is surprisingly fast, but it suffers graphically, and the over-use of cross-hatching only serves to make the game look messy. Double Dragon is playable, sure, but it still fails to make the grade.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	57%
SOUND	20%
PLAYABILITY	65%
VALUE	50%

OVERALL 59%



Not much known so far, only that it's likely to be a tad faster (thank goodness), and the sound effects should pack more of a punch. The price is the same, and a release date is set for January.



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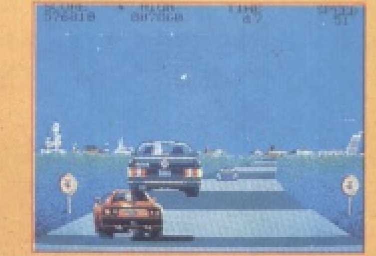
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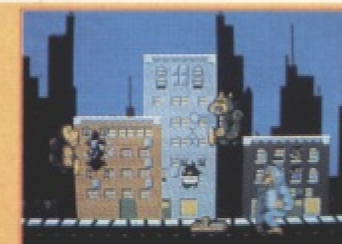
ocean



THE STORY SO FAR... The evil sorcerer Drax has sworn to wreak doom on the people of the Jewelled City unless Princess Mariana is delivered to him. If a champion can be found who is able to defeat his demonic guardians, the Princess will be released. From the wastelands comes an unknown barbarian wielding his broadsword with deadly skill. Can he free the Princess? ONLY YOU CAN SAY...



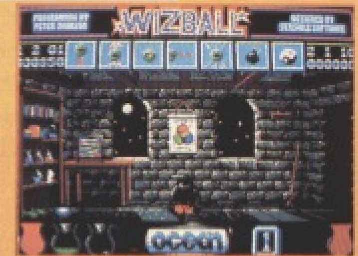
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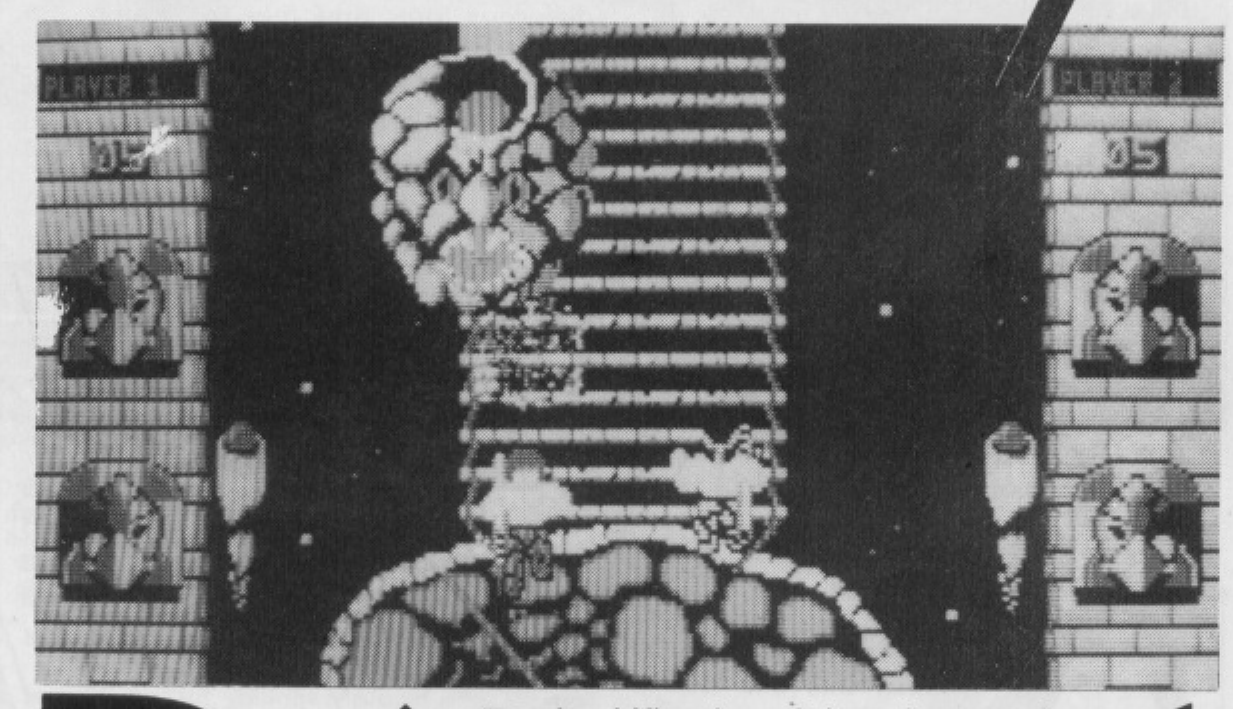
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Victory Road

Super-commandos Paul and Vince are back, only this time they're up against some rather surreal enemies! Ikari Warrior Brian Nesbitt packs his sword and spacesuit (!) and heads off in search of trouble in this Imagine conversion.

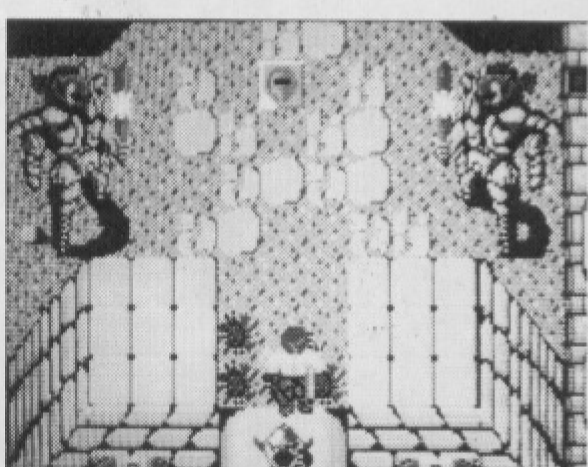


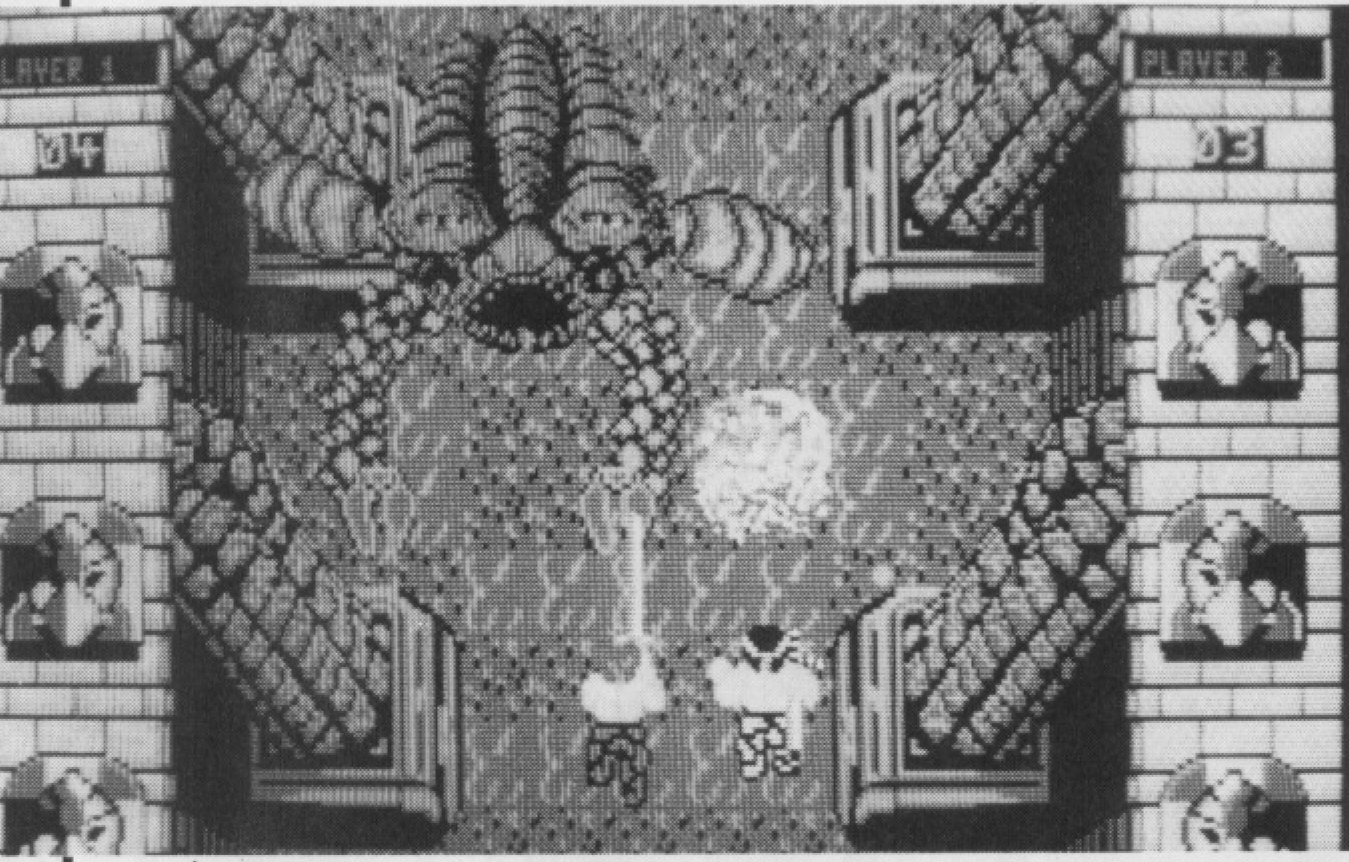
Paul and Vince may sound more like the names of two guys who have just fallen out of the pub on a Saturday night than a pair of crack commandos, but that's exactly what they are. The unlikely-named soliders made their debut in SNK's coin-op **Ikari Warriors** (and later Elite's conversion). They first appeared as two hunky figures in full Rambo dress (ie: no shirt and snazzy colour co-ordinated headbands) and were armed with the ubiquitous M60 and a supply of grenades. Now the science fiction sequel has arrived, with a radically



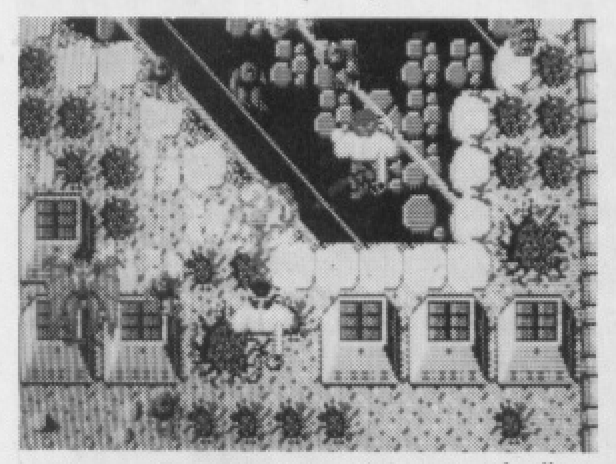
Paul and Vince have their work cut out for them at the beginning of the game when they come up against what looks like a mutant Halloween pumpkin spitting deadly venom. A grenade attack is the order of the day here.

Don't worry, those two giant swordsmen are only inanimate statues. Blowing them up with a well-aimed grenade could reveal a much needed extra weapon.





After inadvertently falling down a warp hole on the ground, our two heroes find themselves in an underground pit inhabited by an enormous (and rather violent) mutated crab-creature. They can't even run away, as destroying it is the only way to escape!


A relatively mild spot of alien-bashing for our two super-commandos (or at least it would be if it weren't for that gargoyle flapping overhead).

different look and feel (although the basic gameplay remains the same).

Quite what was going through the minds of SNK's game designers when they conceived **Victory Road** is beyond me. There's a strange kind of Egyptian flavour to the proceedings, emphasised by the heiroglyphic-style score panels. Also, the aliens that accost Paul and Vince as they advance up the screen are all rather 'different', mostly consisting of miniscule green monsters, with occasional appearances by flying Egyptian Pharoahs and the REAL nasties. These are encountered at various checkpoints in the game and also if Paul or Vince fall down into a creature-infested dungeon.

A

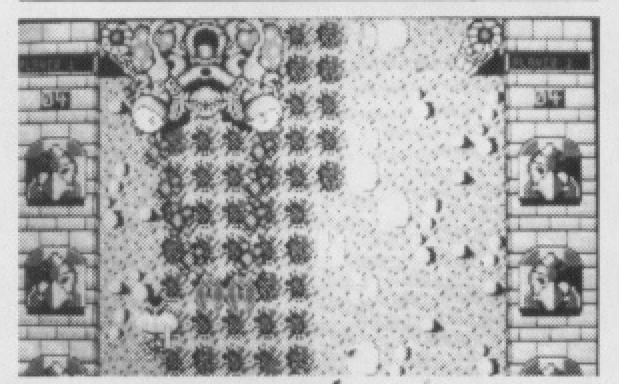
As usual, there's not a great deal of difference between this and the ST version. It plays slightly faster, its a tad more colourful and is a bit more impressive sonically (but not much). Like the ST version, in terms of gameplay it falls at the first hurdle.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	36%
SOUND	45%
PLAYABILITY	41%
VALUE	33%
OVERALL	**40%**

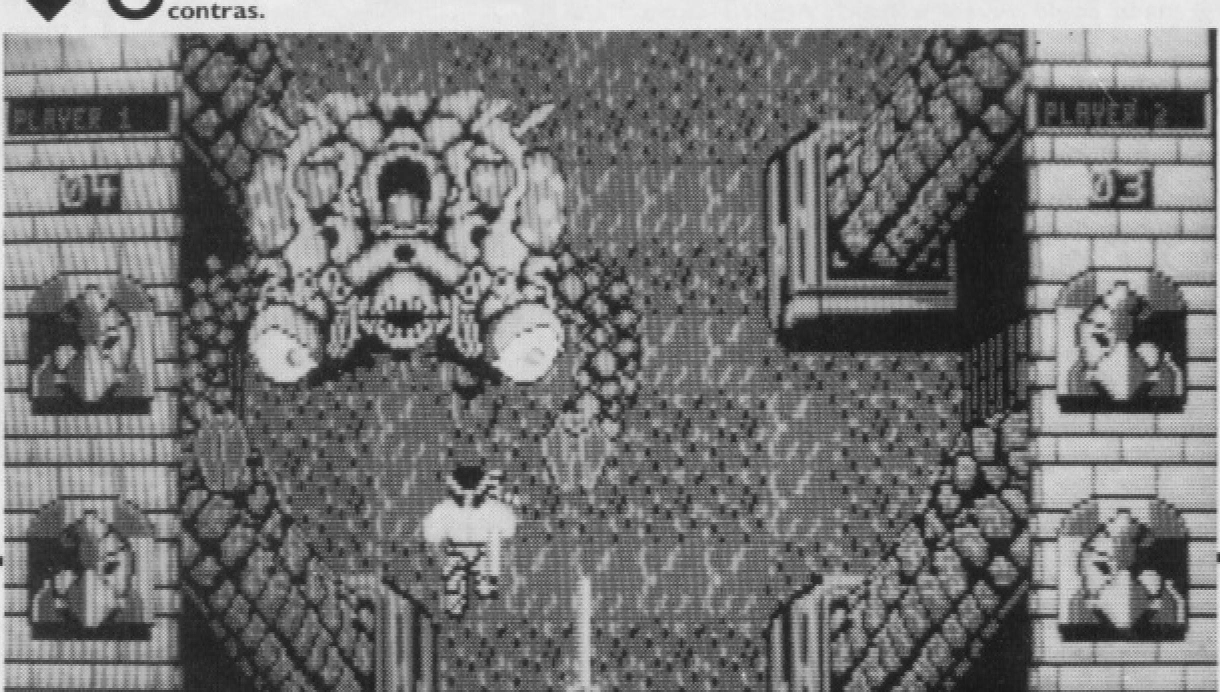
ST

This is a pretty lame conversion of what is, to be fair, a pretty lame coin-op. Programmer Microwish can do better, as its last effort, Hewson's Zynaps, proved beyond doubt. The graphics are abysmal, and the sprites are particularly poor, as is the jerky scrolling and sluggish animation. The title music isn't too bad, but there's no option to have the music play during the game itself and so the player has to put up with third-rate effects. Victory Road is a surprisingly poor release from Imagine, especially when you consider that the quality of its 16-bit software has been picking up of late. Hopefully the forthcoming Guerilla War (the third in the Ikari series) will be an improvement over this shoddy effort.

PRICE	£19.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	36%
SOUND	45%
PLAYABILITY	41%
VALUE	33%
OVERALL	**40%**


With the end in sight, Paul and Vince once again meet a super-nasty intent on stopping them reaching their goal.

Obviously spoiling for a fight, yet another crab-like guardian confronts our fearless contras.

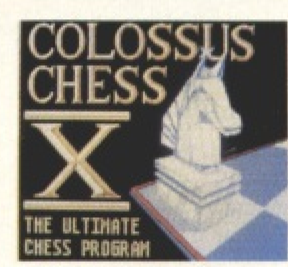




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Colossus

The release of CDS's Colossus X rekindles the age-old chess argument... is it a boring intellectual ego-trip or a fascinating war game? Brian Nesbitt has the answer.



Chess is an ancient game with a murky history, but it certainly dates from at least the 2nd century AD. A worldwide standard of rules has evolved over the years, whereby the game is now played using two sets of 16 pieces on a chequered 64 square board. The object is to force your opponent into a position where his chief piece (The King) cannot be moved or allowed to remain in the same position without being taken.

Although a world championship was instituted in 1851, it wasn't until 1924 that the FIDE (Federation Internationale Des Echecs) was set up to govern the game. That body now rates Grand Masters by the numerical ELO system, with Bobby Fischer claiming the highest all-time rating of 3,785.

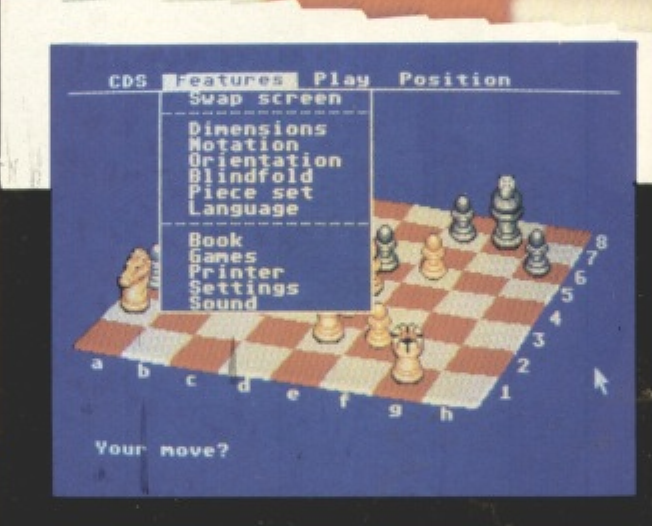
Chess programs have been around since the earliest days of computing, with the game's logical structure perfectly suited to a binary interpretation. And although they got off to a slightly shaky start, home micro versions have now been developed to a degree where they are capable of taking on even the most accomplished player.

Colossus X is the latest in a highly successful series, which previously spawned **Colossus 2.0** on the C64 and **Colossus IV** on all of the major 8-bit formats. This latest 16-bit version has developed from the programmer's experience with the previous releases, and now sports just about every feature that a chess devotee could ever want – most notably a fully manoeuvrable board and infinite play levels.

Probably the most remarkable and innovative feature of this version is its ability to 'learn' as it plays. Should a player execute a move or series of moves which isn't contained in the program's 'book', it will immediately memorise it for use at a later date. Logically this means that **Colossus X** will actually improve to match the standard of any regular opponent.

The three dimensional display is one of the clearest and most user-friendly yet, but for those who prefer to play 'newspaper' style, there's an equally clear 2D option. This supports the same board rotate and piece set features.





The player can choose to set up his pieces on any side of the board, while for further clarity the board can be tilted through a range of 60 degrees.

Chess X

The book disk contains the final positions of 29 games (which can then be replayed move by move) and 10 problems. For instance can you spot White's mate in four moves?

Slight delays in the conversion mean that an Amiga Colossus may not be available until February or March. It should however be worth the wait, as improvements are promised over the ST's cosmetics (the gameplay should remain exactly the same), where digitised speech and a new range of beeps will complement marginally better graphics. The main difference will be that both the program and book of moves will be contained on one Amiga disk, instead of the two necessary for the ST.

ST

Colossus X combines ease of use and graphic clarity with a game so versatile that it will suit chess players of any ability. Add to this the facility to almost totally customise the display and what you've got is one of the most complete computer chess packages of all time. One fault that did become apparent was the difficulty in selecting certain options – due mostly to the confusing names presented on the menus (for instance the option to set the computer's 'intelligence' level is called Type Of Play and involves a little more than simply selecting a number). However, a quick read of the accompanying manual soon puts this right – and unlike most gameplayers, chess fanatics are likely to give a manual even a cursory glance before loading up. The 16-bit computer is an ideal environment for the development of realistic and challenging chess games and Colossus has taken full advantage of all the resources offered to it. Colossus Chess X bills itself as 'The Ultimate Chess Program' and this may not be an idle boast.

PRICE	£24.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	83%
SOUND	81%
PLAYABILITY	87%
VALUE	83%
OVERALL	**88%**

Thirty-eight year old Martin Bryant could never be accused of being anything other than dedicated. Almost from the moment he began at university (studying computer science), Martin was working feverishly on his own chess program, firstly on the university's mainframe and then on his own Apple II.

The resulting program, **White Knight**, won the prestigious European Chess Championship in 1983, incidentally beating another of Martin's programs – **Colossus.**

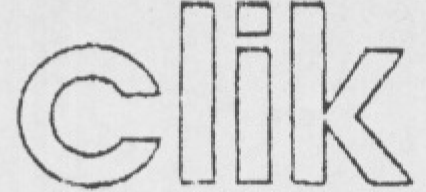
Martin claims not to have experienced any difficulty in crossing over to the 16-bit computers for version X (whatever happened to versions five to nine?).

When he's not working out new algorithims, Martin likes to indulge in a gentle spot of Karate (he's a brown belt) or a session in the local gym's workout room.

COLOSSUS X CHESS

Your move?

The choice of piece sets ranges from the sublime Oriental, to the slightly less sublime futuristic (above).



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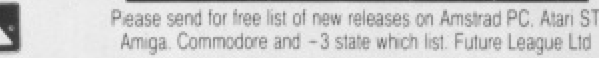
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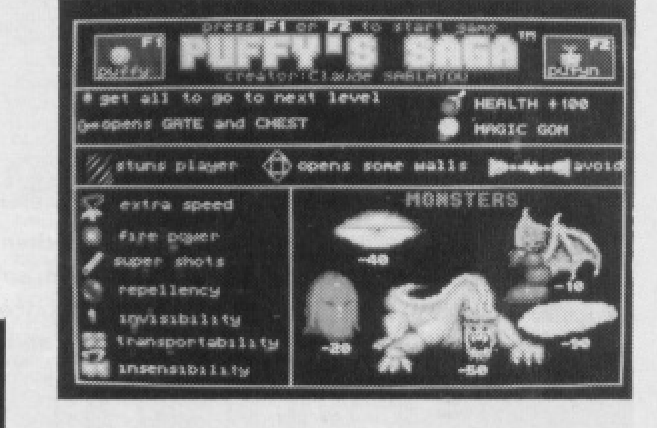
Puffy's Saga

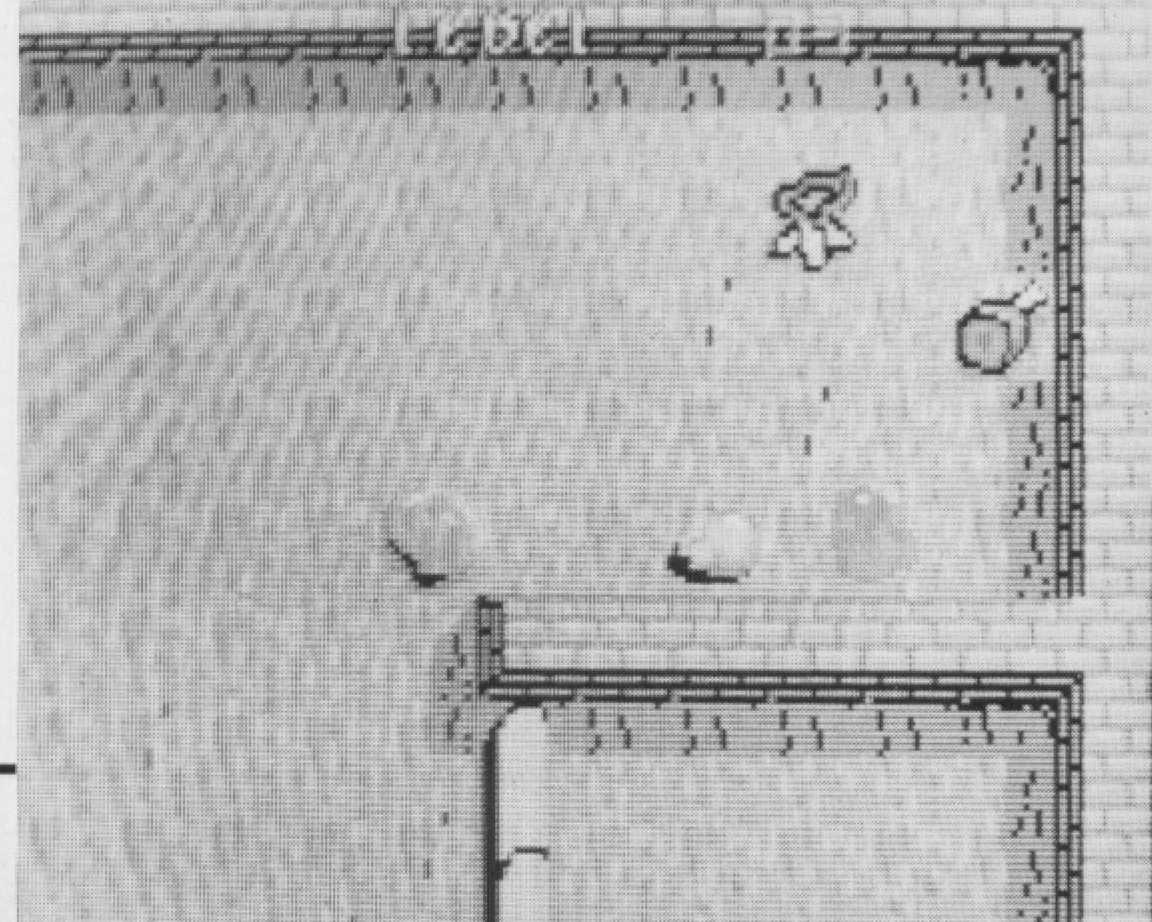
Strip away the cute voices and twee graphics and Ubisoft's latest begins to look remarkably like another Gauntlet game. Gary Penn decides what sex he is and enters the dungeon to investigate.

French software house Ubisoft has been knocking around for at least three years now, and despite its virtual anonymity, it enjoyed success of sorts with some quality 8-bit products over two years ago.

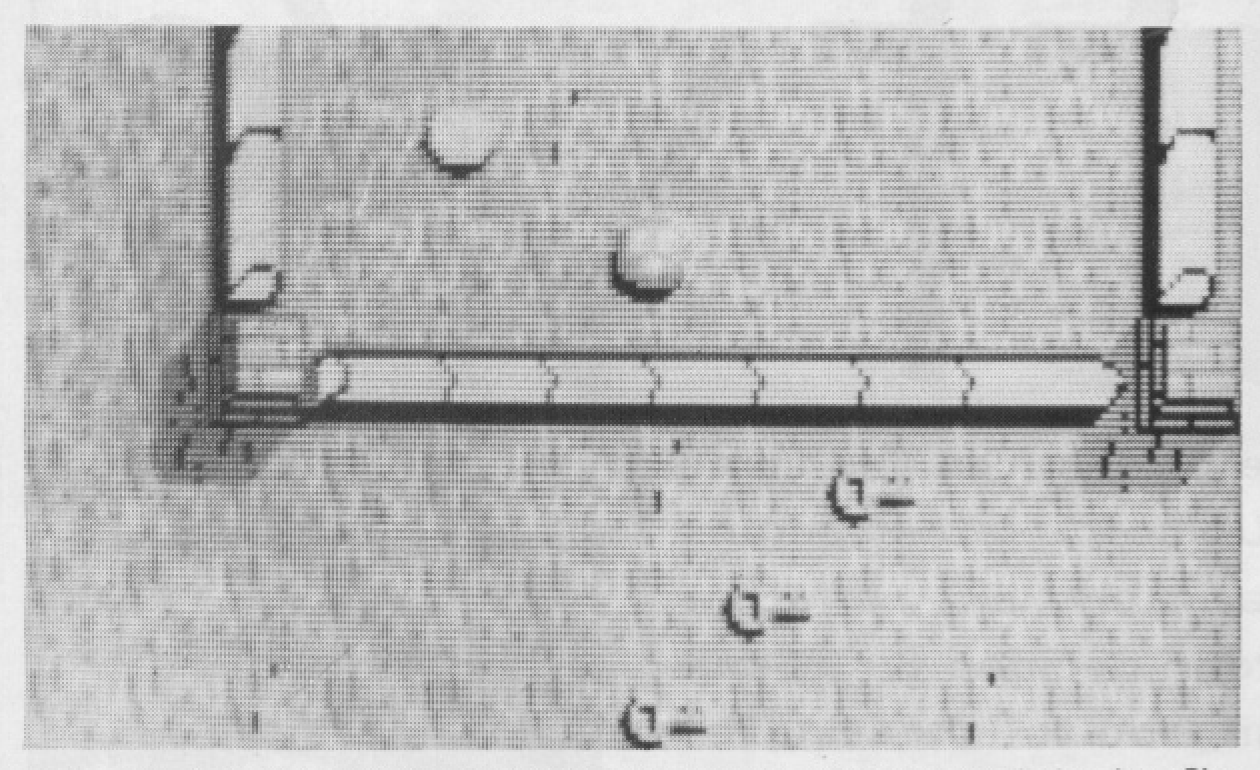
Puffy's Saga is one of its first 16-bit releases, and is a sort of cross between **PacMan** and **Gauntlet**. **PacMan** because you have to negotiate a maze and collect dots in the process, and **Gauntlet** because... well, because **Gauntlet is PacMan** taken to an extreme – negotiate more complex mazes, and collect items such as keys and food instead of the more basic dots and power pills. In fact, **Puffy's Saga** is more of a glorified **PacMan** than **Gaunlet** ever was.

The scenario sees Puffy and his girlfriend Pufyn trapped in a dungeon, with mazes to explore, items to collect and hundreds of creatures to kill or avoid – *a la* **Gauntlet**. You can play either Puffy or Pufyn – Puffy being the big, butch male of the species, shooting hard and moving slowly, while Pufyn is weaker but capable of much greater speed.

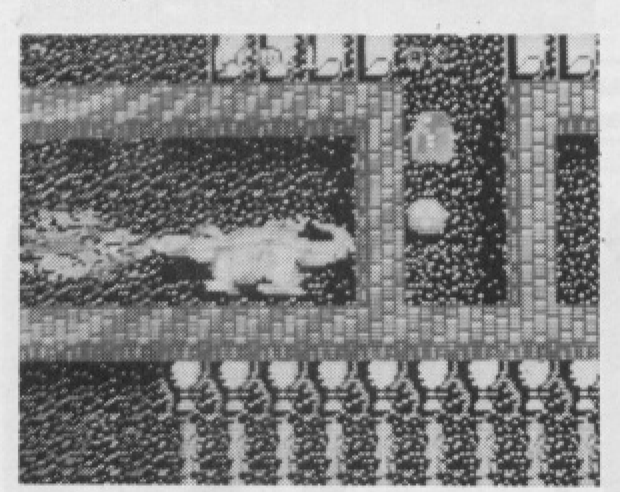




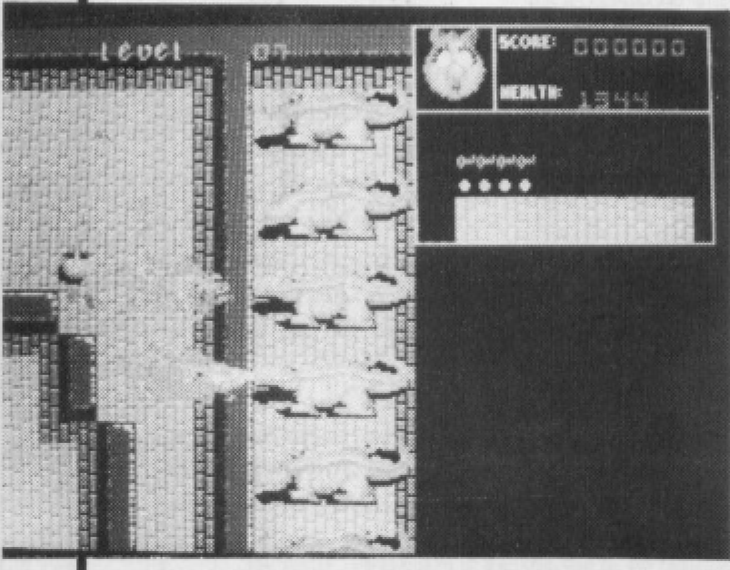
◀ **"Yeum!" says Puffy when he collects food to boost his health. Sometimes he mumbles "Hehehehehe!". He he he...**



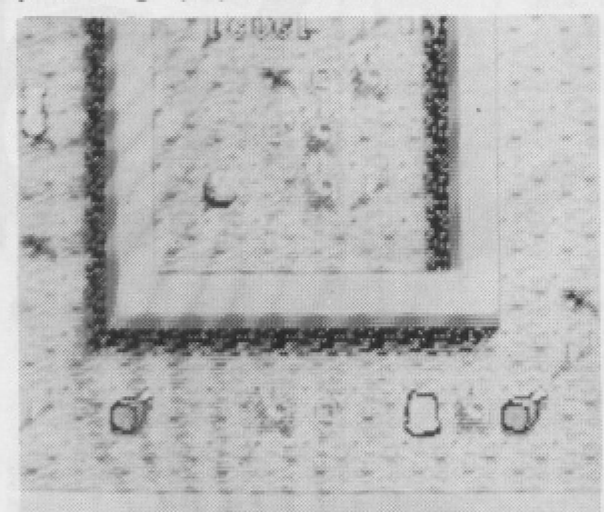
"Hello," says Puffy or Pufyn in the most sickeningly cute voice you are ever likely to hear. Play then begins, and it's time to run around, collect some dots and shoot a few monsters in the process. Keys are dotted about the mazes and are used to 'open' barriers. Alternatively you can remain passive for 30 seconds or so and cause all barriers to disappear.



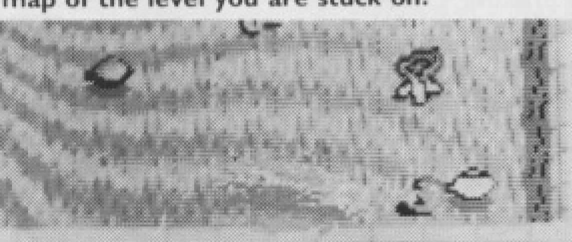
Some levels, like this one, feature fire-breathing dragons that roar a terrifying sampled roar. Don't stray too close or Puffy's energy level (or life force) will be reduced, and if his energy gets too low, the computer will exclaim "Puffy, you will die!" Worse still, if all is lost, it's "Game Over" in a voice not too disimilar to that found in Loriciels' Mach 3.

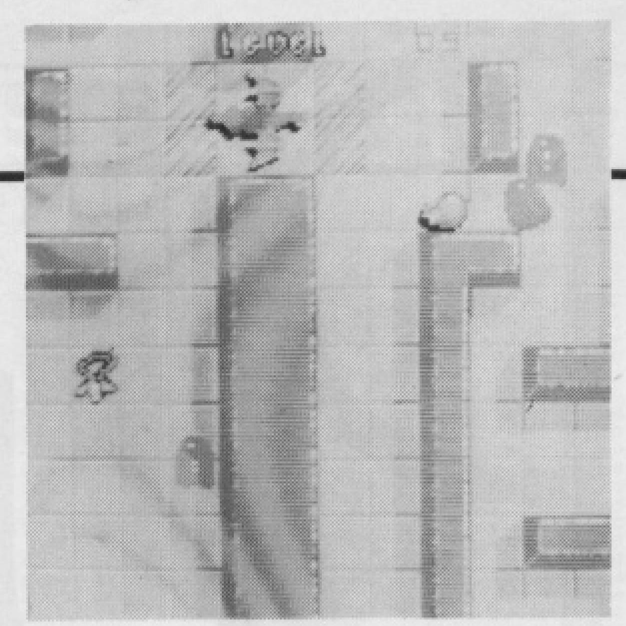


You can decrease or increase the speed at which you and the monsters move, thus providing three game speeds. More useful though, is the facility to load and save a game from the seventh level onwards. And if you can't quite make it, there's always the training mode which allows you to begin play from Level Seven.



Collect Magic Goms to enable you to activate specific functions, such as the ability to move onto the next level, extra fire power, life-points and speed. You can also decrease the speed of the monsters, change into Puffy or Pufyn and thus inherit their respective capabilities, and bring up a map of the level you are stuck on.





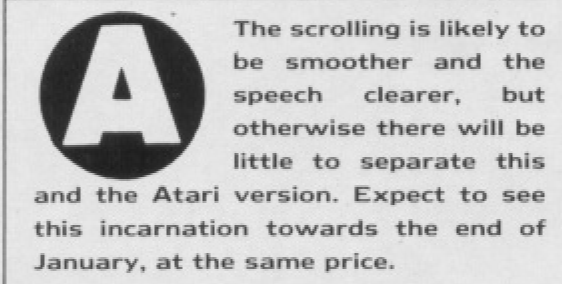
Scattered around the mazes are some useful items, including the amulet pictured here which conveys extra speed when collected. "Puffy now has a fast speed," squawks the computer in its cute voice. Other handly bits to collect include the ability to breathe fire, extra powerful super-shots, repellency (which causes all creatures on-screen to run away), invisibility (which means nothing can see you), transportability and insensibility (which means you can run through anything, including the maze walls).



Gauntlet II is the yardstick by which other games of this type should be judged. And using this measure, Puffy's Saga has some original features, but lacks the edge of its contemporary. Gauntlet II is smoother and subsequently more playable than Puffy's Saga. Gauntlet II also has a four player option whereas Puffy's Saga is a solo game only. Movement isn't overly fluid, although the jerky scrolling becomes less obvious as the action hots up. Puffy has a few innovative features, like the Magic Goms, but ultimately it's a little too similar to Gauntlet, and to cap it all, a little too difficult at times.

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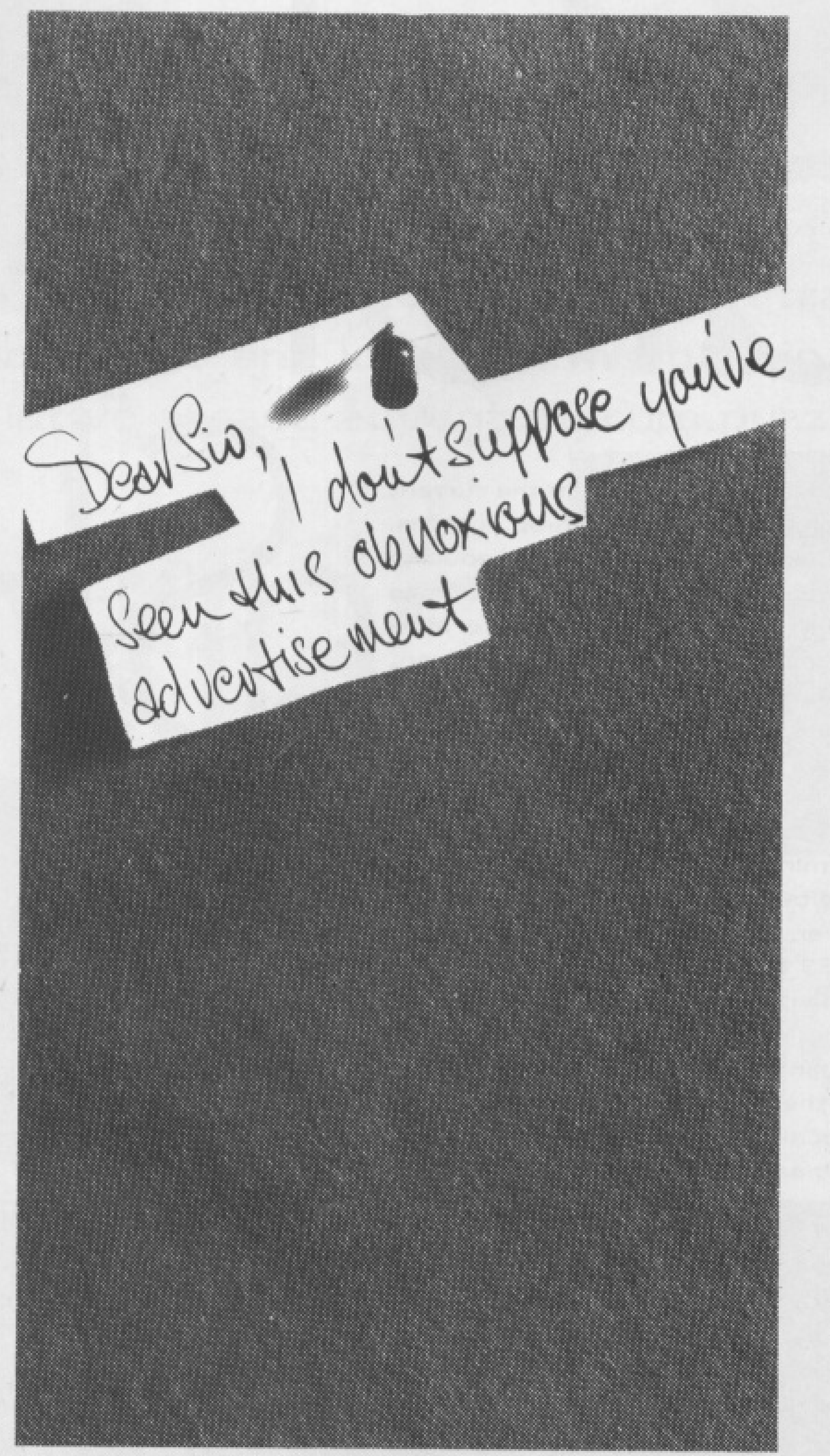
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The scrolling is likely to be smoother and the speech clearer, but otherwise there will be little to separate this and the Atari version. Expect to see this incarnation towards the end of January, at the same price.



A CGA and EGA compatible version is due for release early next year, at the same price as the ST and Amiga versions.



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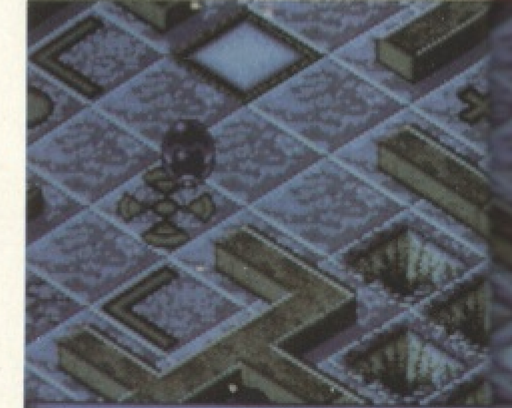
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Incredible Shri



It's nice to see that in the current glut of film and coin-op licences, Electric Dreams is still producing good original products... such as **Incredible Shrinking Sphere. Marble Madness** fans are in for a treat here, as the game combines the best elements of the Atari coin-op classic and adds some original features of its own. The result is an isometric arcade-style puzzle game that requires a sharp mind and even sharper reflexes.

Despite the superficial similarities however, the only real resemblance that **ISS** bears to **Marble Madness** is the spherical object under your control and the forced-perspective viewpoint. Although arcade skills are required to avoid the traps and monsters, a cool head is also required if the mazes and puzzles are to be solved.



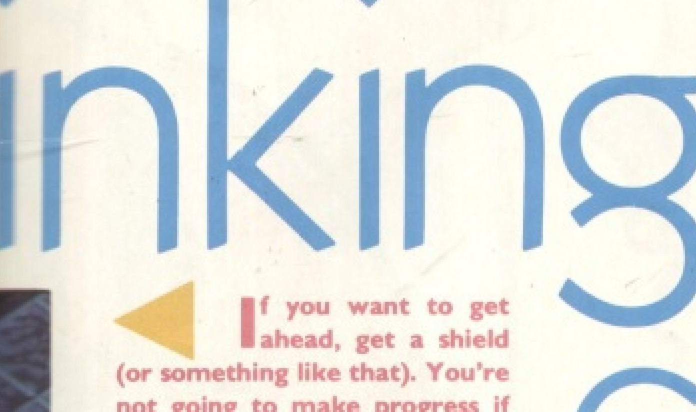
When you've turned your last cheek against the evil marauding monsters, pop into the ammunitions point you positioned at the start of the level and upgrade your weaponry. Forget the puny one-shot plasma cannon, how about a triple-shot cannon, or even the super-destructive reflective shot lasers that richochet from the cavern walls? The choice is yours, but remember that the higher the power of your weapon, the quicker your ammunition supply dwindles.





Watch out for the much-needed helpful features that appear all too infrequently. Apart from the shield recharger, there are ramps to jump over walls, movable wall sections, tiles that bump your score up (usually followed by tiles that knock it back down again!), Binary Rebound Boosters that blast you out of a tight situation and the Question Mark, the ISS equivalent of a Monopoly Chance card. Roll onto it and who knows what may happen.





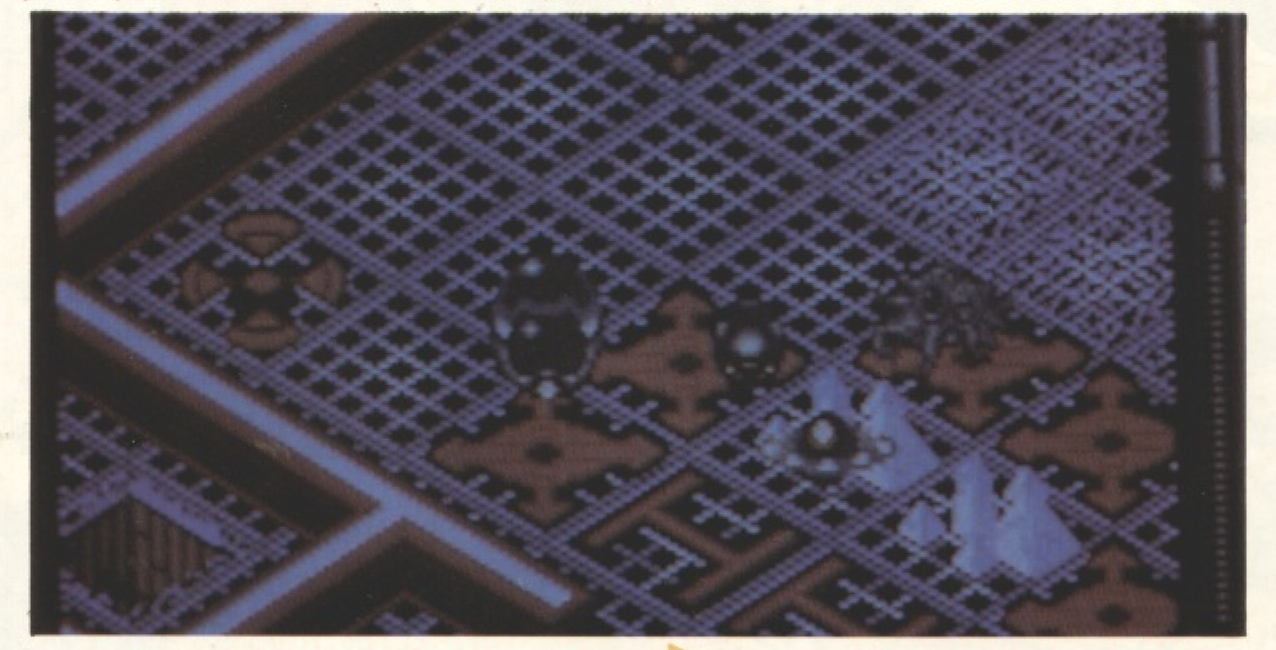
Electric Dreams' latest is a game with balls... literally! Spherical adventurer Gary Whitta finds his bearings and loses his marbles in this superlative arcade adventure cum puzzle game.

[Sh]rinking Sphere

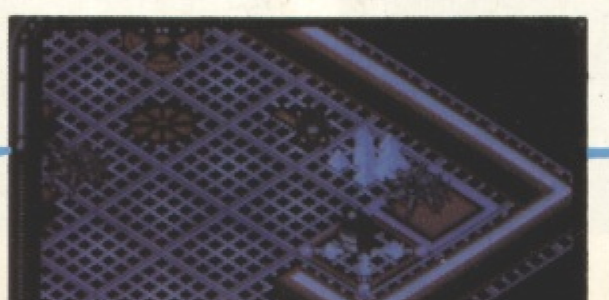


If you want to get ahead, get a shield (or something like that). You're not going to make progress if you don't keep your energy shield topped up by regularly visiting the shield points. They're easy to find on Level One, but become harder and harder to locate as the game goes on.

If you want to escape from the world of ISS, you'll have to learn to use the magic tiles that adorn the floors. When these are run over, the sphere grows or shrinks – and can even lose and gain weight! But be careful, grow too big and you'll have trouble negotiating the narrow pathways found on later levels, become too heavy and weak tiles may crumble beneath you!



Not all the special tiles is ISS are friendly, in fact most of them are a downright nuisance. The most annoying of the lot is the prison, an impenetrable force field that temporarily entraps the sphere. A stranded sphere is easy meat for the monsters that appear from the Gauntlet-like generators.



Each of the eight levels consist of four layers or 'plates' stacked on top of one another like a sandwich. The object of each level is simply to find the exit and escape. A blueprint-style plan appears at the beginning of each level, allowing a view of the game area which outlines walls, special panels and power-up points. There's also an option to pre-position a special ammunition dump anywhere on any plane to help boost your firepower (if you can find it again!).



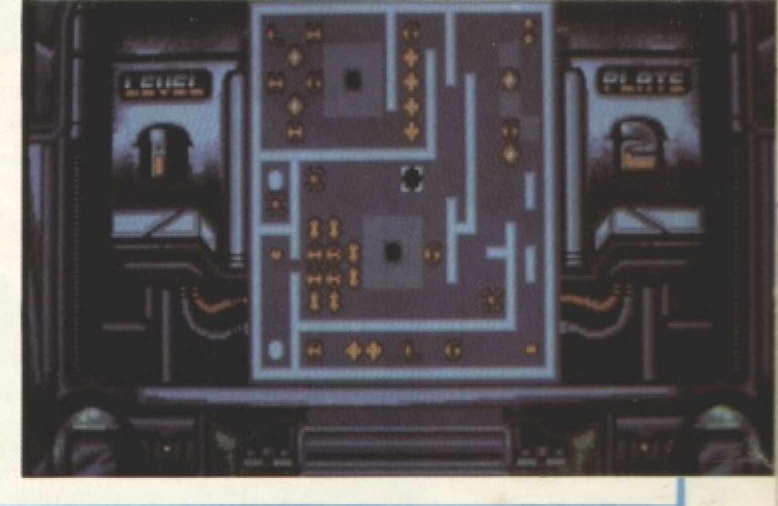
Up until now, only those in possession of 8-bit micros have been able to savour the delights of isometric puzzle games such as Spindizzy, Revolution and Red LED. ISS looks set to put that situation to rights. It's a playable game that delivers a perfect combination of arcade action and brain-straining puzzles. There's so much to see and do that you can happily wander around just trying out the special tiles and scrapping with monsters before you even start to think about escaping! The time limit idea is original (instead of just a timer, the landscape and tiles begin to collapse and leave dangerous abysses if you hang around too long) and adds to the inevitable tension. The graphics are slick and sound has been put to good use, with some gorgeous effects and pleasant music to be heard. ISS is a neat blend of different game elements that looks great and is a joy to play.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	January
GRAPHICS	78%
SOUND	70%
PLAYABILITY	82%
VALUE	71%

OVERALL 80%



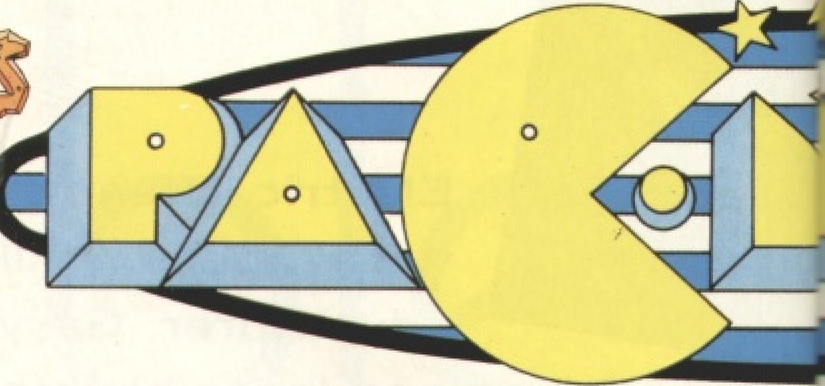
The most important element – the gameplay – is exactly the same as on the ST. However the Amiga's soundtrack has been beefed up considerably and now sports some lovely sampled bouncing noises and enhanced music. Both versions are being programmed simultaneously, but this version will appear on the shelves slightly later.





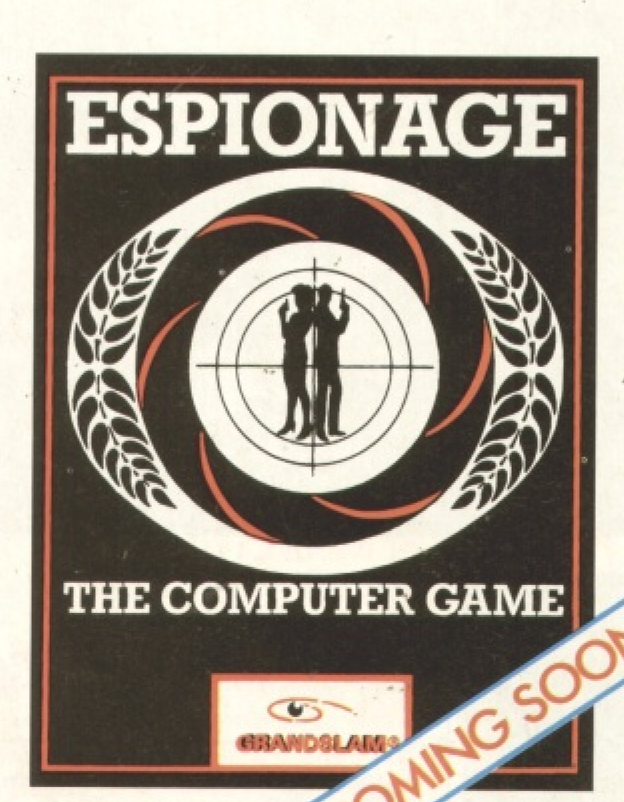
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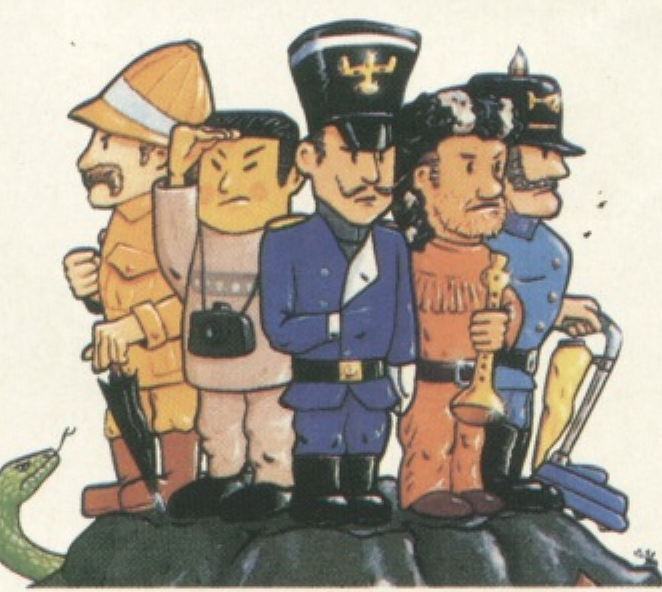


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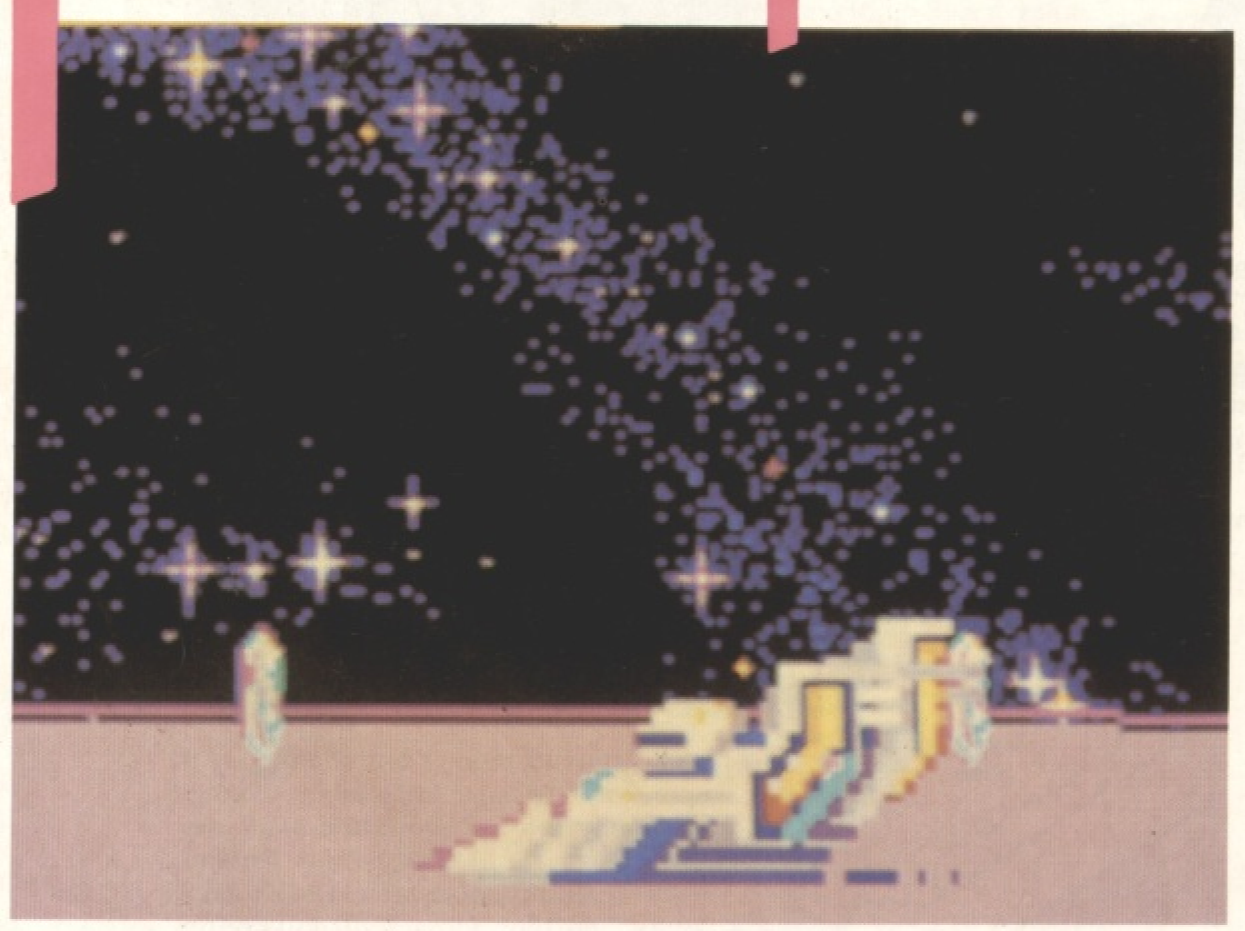
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EXXOS

Ere Information's pseudo sequel to Captain Blood, its chart-topping classic of 1988, has Gary Penn seeing red . . . and purple. Lots of it.



Purple Sa



There's plenty of bumping and barging and a little confusion involved as you fight to collect the most energy. Memories will come flooding back to anyone who's ever played Lucasfilm's Atari 8-bit classic Ballblazer, as part of the method of control is similar to the disorientating effect of Rotosnapping. Luckily there's a radar to the left of the playing area. The red dot is the energy ball, while you and your opponent are represented by yellow and blue arrows respectively.

The Purple Saturn Day Games are held every year when the skies around the planet Saturn turn purple. Eight beings come together from the neighbouring planets to be split into competing pairs who participate in four events. It's a bit like a bizarre Epyx games package.

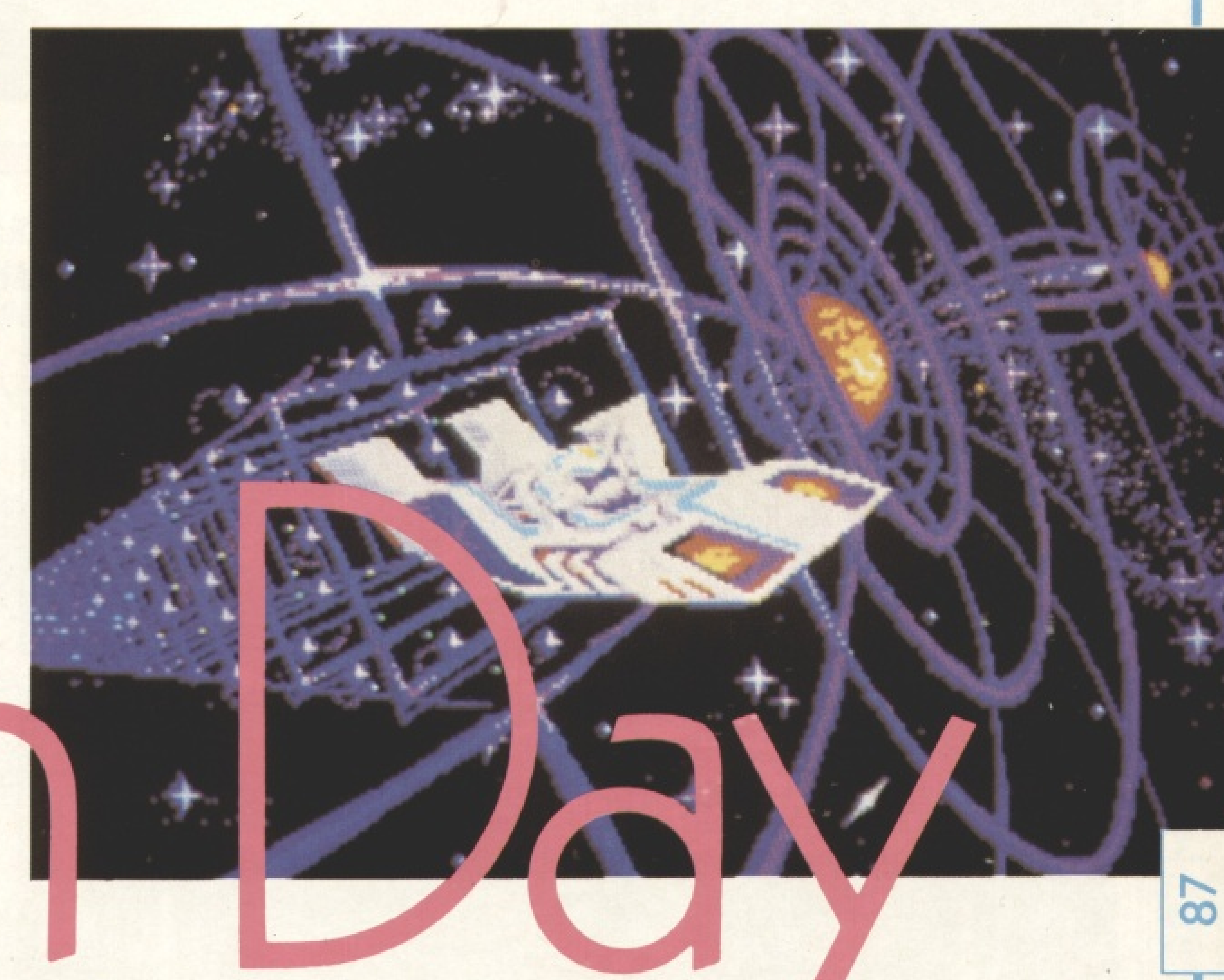
Before taking part in the competition proper it's wise to take advantage of the facility to practice each event. The competition works on a knockout basis, where the eight competitors fight it out to get into quarter-finals then on to semi-finals and ultimately the final. And the prize for the outright winner? A kiss from the Purple Saturn Day Queen. Great.

Yummy. The winner gets to play tonsil hockey with the Purple Saturn Day Queen.





On your marks . . . get set . . . go speeding around Saturn's asteroid ring in the Ring Pursuit.



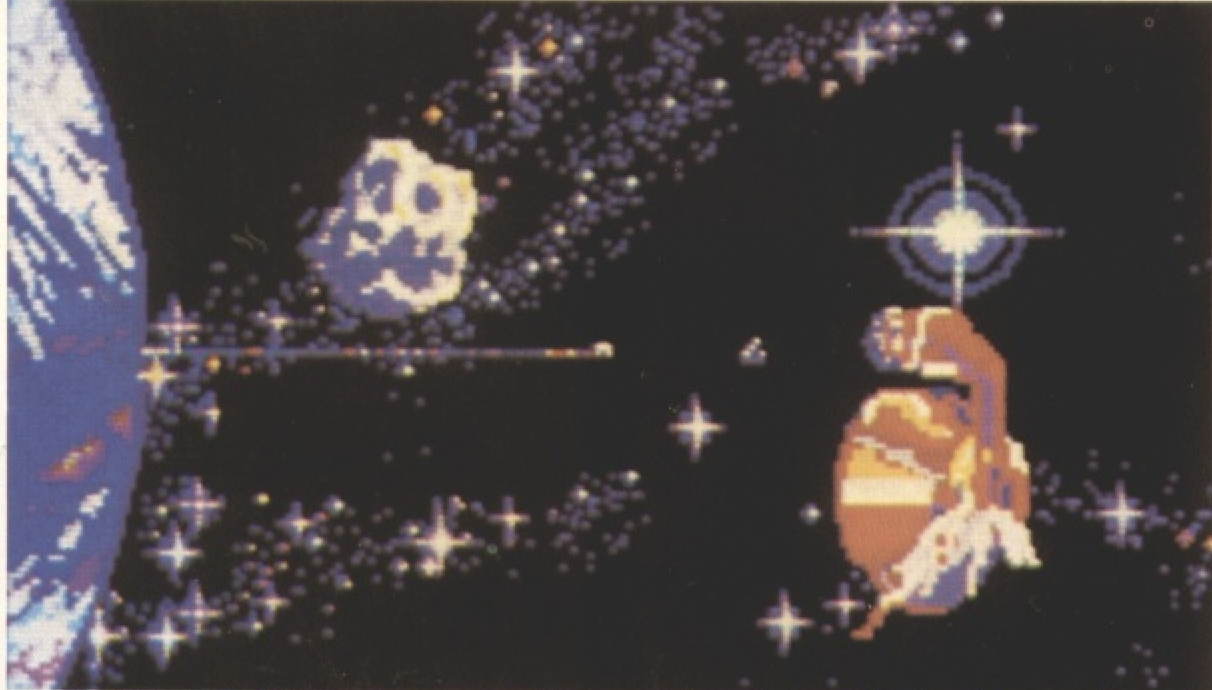
aturn Day



The Time Jump is odd. There's not exactly much to do and it's certainly the weakest event, as all you have to do is shoot sparks to collect energy to fuel a sort of gravity catapult which propels you 'through time'. The more energy you collect, the further you are propelled through time. And the further you get, the more points you're awarded . . .

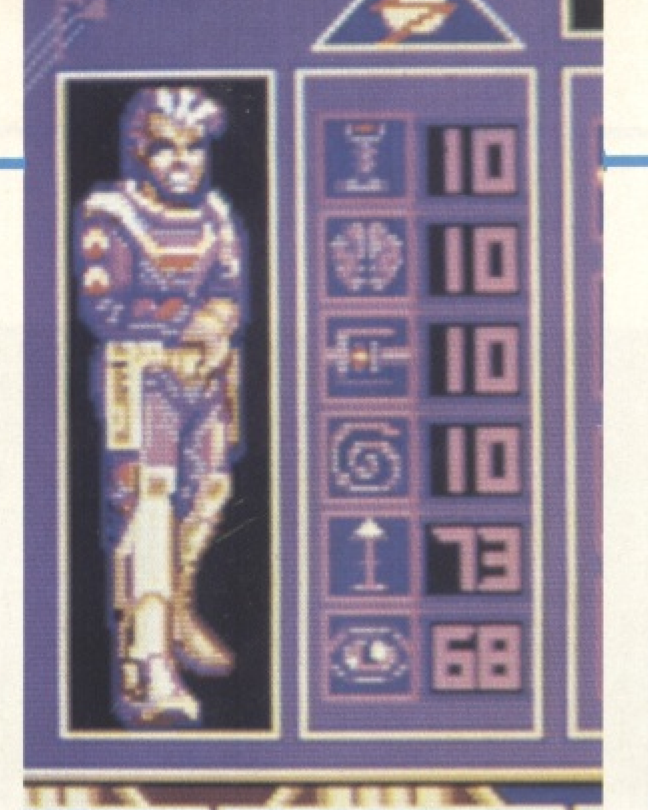


The most taxing event of the four is the Brain Bowler. Re-activate your side of the brain before your opponent does his by guiding six charges moving around the circuit into a central point – the Exxos. This isn't easy, as there are switches to open and close to allow the charges to flow, along with resistances which slow them down or speed them up. Switches and the like are activated by shooting them with your yellow clump of crystals, and just to make life difficult, the components are small and difficult to hit.



The Ring Pursuit is effectively a slalom course in 3D and set in outer space. Negotiate a course of asteroids interspersed with red (seen above) and yellow markers. You score points when you're in the lead, but you only score points for yourself when you pass to the left of the yellow markers and to the right of the red. Otherwise it's your opponent who benefits.





The eight competitors are ready and raring to go, all eager to win a place in the quarter-finals. Captain Blood fans should spot some familiar faces . . . Above the placings we have icons for the four events. From left to right: Ring Pursuit, Tronic Slider, Brain Bowler and Time Jump.





The Tronic Slider event is set on a plateau in space and has you and your opponent sat snugly in scooters, battling it out for possession of crystals. An energy ball appears somewhere on the play area, and it fragments when shot, leaving two of you to fight it out for possession.



Having collected enough energy to pass through the Crown Of Seven Suns you enter another dimension . . . and depending on how much energy you acquired, you get a pretty picture – like this smudgy fish.



ST

Captain Blood was a bit of an oddity. It was slick, professional and very well put together, but gameplay left a lot to be desired. Purple Saturn Day is also a bit of an oddity, but thankfully it's not due to a lack of gameplay, more its nature. Odd. There's a chunk at the beginning of the lengthy manual which borders on grossly pretentious (something to do with alien recipes of sorts), but that's about as bad as it gets. The graphics are impressive throughout. Nothing seems out of place, and there are some beautifully detailed scenes and smooth animation. Sound is also quite special and is put to good use all round, with undoubtedly some of the best effects heard on the ST. The four events are all playable, although the appeal of the Time Jump is limited. A two player head to head option would have made matters more interesting in the long run, but as it stands, Purple Saturn Day provides more than adequate entertainment, especially for followers of Captain Blood.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	89%
SOUND	90%
PLAYABILITY	74%
VALUE	70%
OVERALL	**75%**



It won't come as any great surprise to learn that this version is very similar to that on the ST. The Amiga's sound chip is put to good use and the spot effect are marginally clearer than those heard on the ST.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	89%
SOUND	90%
PLAYABILITY	74%
VALUE	70%
OVERALL	**75%**



Captain Blood survived the transition from ST to PC relatively intact, so there's no real reason why Purple Saturn Day should suffer. Details are a little thin on the ground at the moment, but it's certain that you won't see anything until at least early next year.

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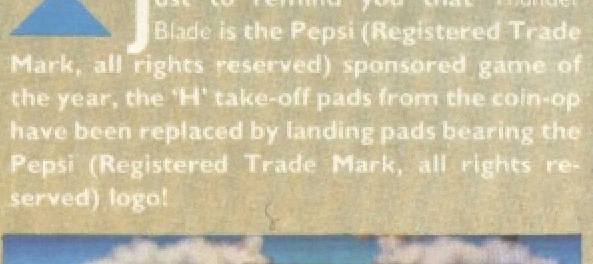
The vertically scrolling levels are teeming with both airborne and ground-based threats such as jet fighters, tanks, other helicopters and gun emplacements. A burst of cannon fire or the occasional missile sees them off, but your main priority should be to avoid the glowing orbs fired up at you. And don't crash into any of the skyscrapers!

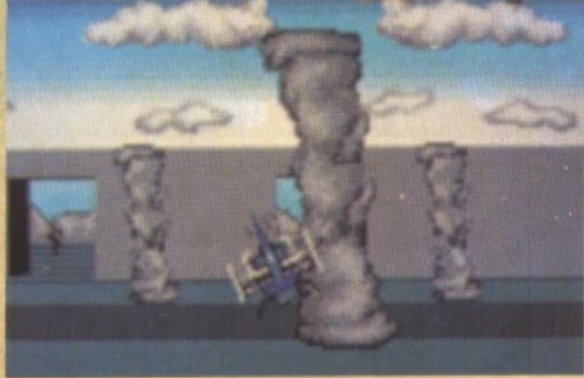
ThunderBlade

Thunder Blade's **similarity to** After-burner **becomes clear when the second part of each stage is reached. In by far the most enjoyable section, the player flies the chopper through similar terrain as encountered earlier, but from a different viewpoint. The same threats are present, but more skill is needed to avoid them as the enemy flak comes directly out of the screen at you.**

Thunder Blade's **super deluxe model is arguably one of the weirdest coin-ops ever to appear. It's also one of the most disorientating, as anybody who has played it will tell you. Although it looks like a hydraulic machine, the power that throws the player around in his chair is in fact generated by the player himself! The joystick is connected to a series of levers underneath the chair that rotate it in accordance with the joystick movements. Although this movement method may cut down on machine cost, the effect it produces is not nearly as effective as the truly hydraulic** Afterburner**. And just try entering your name on the high-score table!**




Just to remind you that Thunder Blade is the Pepsi (Registered Trade Mark, all rights reserved) sponsored game of the year, the 'H' take-off pads from the coin-op have been replaced by landing pads bearing the Pepsi (Registered Trade Mark, all rights reserved) logo!



After a considerable push, US Gold's conversion of the cult classic Sega coin-op is finally here. Gary Whitta tries to remember the difference between cyclic and collective.



For the last three years, US Gold has named the biggest and most expensive coin-op licence as its 'game of the year', and so far it's had a fair bit of success with its '86 and '87 games – **Gauntlet** and **OutRun** both made the prestigious Christmas Number One spot. Sega's pseudo-sequel to **Afterburner** is its choice for 1988, and although some may say that it's the weakest licence of the three, it hasn't stopped US Gold from hyping it more than anything it's released before.

The objective in Thunder Blade is to destroy the headquarters of an evil military power which lies at the end of four enemy-infested territories, each split into three separate stages. The first section of each level is a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up, similar to games like Flying Shark and 1943 in some respects but completely different in others. The main difference is the novel use of parallax scrolling that gives a feeling of 'depth'.



ST Tiertex's conversion of Thunder Blade plays just like its coin-op parent... and that's the problem. The coin-up is as weak on gameplay as Afterburner, and success seems to depend much more on luck than on skill. The conversion suffers similarly. Thunder Blade is infuriatingly difficult to play, especially so in the 2D section, where the dodgy collision detection helps to make the proceedings a little less enjoyable than they otherwise might have been. Lives are frequently lost for no apparent reason, and there are times when the helicopter is destroyed by a missile even before control is handed over to the player. Control is more often than not fiddly and unco-operative. The method of holding down the fire button in conjunction with the joystick to gain and lose speed means you can't fire missiles while accelerating and also makes control of the helicopter difficult on the whole. The playing area is on the small side and screen update jerky. The 3D sections are handled well but they are spoiled by the bad execution of the vertical stages. Some of the coin-op's features have been omitted; the game no longer pans the graphics from the 2D viewpoint to 3D and the beautiful animation sequence where the helicopter flies away into a golden sun has been replaced by a weedy congratulations message. All in all, Thunder Blade is a reasonably well executed conversion of the coin-op that was unfortunately doomed from the start due to its weak gameplay.

PRICE	£19.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	79%
SOUND	71%
PLAYABILITY	66%
VALUE	60%

OVERALL 65%

A Although the Amiga version isn't any faster than its ST counterpart, the game is somewhat smoother on the whole. There are some funky guitar samples at the end of each level and the whole thing seems a tad more playable, but most of the gameplay faults that afflicted the ST are still present.

PRICE	£24.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	82%
SOUND	72%
PLAYABILITY	72%
VALUE	62%

OVERALL 69%

PC Tiertex, the programmer of the ST and Amiga versions is handling the PC version, but as work has only just started, don't expect to see anything of it until at least March '89.

▲ If you think you can sit back and rest on your laurels after completing the first two torturous stages, you'd be wrong as the third has a huge guardian to destroy. In this, the first, it's a heavily-armed battleship several screens in length. Blow out the gun turrets and vulnerable areas with missiles, avoid the ubiquitous orbs and destroy the guardian at the very end to proceed to the next section (after a progress report on the stage and a healthy points bonus).

▼ Here it is! The enemy HQ lies at the end of the final level (the refinery) and forms a stage all of its own. Quite rightly the hardest part of the game, there's no room for error as you attempt to knock out the command fortress with missile shots to the vulnerable areas.



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DEMOS

This year's Christmas Commodore Show delivered plenty of new and original Amiga demos, in particular a wonderful Imperial AT-AT Walker animation sequence digitised from The Empire Strikes Back. Unfortunately the current version only runs on a 2Mb Amiga, but a 1Mb version is being converted as we speak.

17 Bit Software were at the show, and were inundated with hundreds of disks from new programmers, with some of the best of these featured this month. Unfortunately the ST side of things is still looking a bit thin, with only one decent demo arriving.

As usual, if you like the look of any of the disks featured this month, write to 17 Bit Software at PO Box 97, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF1 1XX or ring them on 0924 366982.



DISK 31

A This is certainly one of the more impressive 1Mb demos around. It was first given an airing at last year's PC Show and is now freely on the domain. It's a cute 3D animation sequence which shows a hapless unicycle being run over a speeding sports car. Sounds weird but the speed at which everything moves is reminiscent of the demos that supercomputers like the Cray XMP turn out from time to time. Sampled music accompanies the sequence and rounds off one of the best sequences the Amiga has seen to date.



DISK 160

ST One for all the heavy metal fans out there. A short sequence sampled from Def Leppard's platinum album, **Hysteria**, illustrated by a neat graphic interpretation of the album cover. The sample is short, and after a few minutes becomes the ST equivalent of Chinese water torture. Surely there was enough room in the Atari's massive 512K memory to play more than a 10 second sample? That said, the quality is very high and shows just what the ST can come up with if you ask it nicely enough.

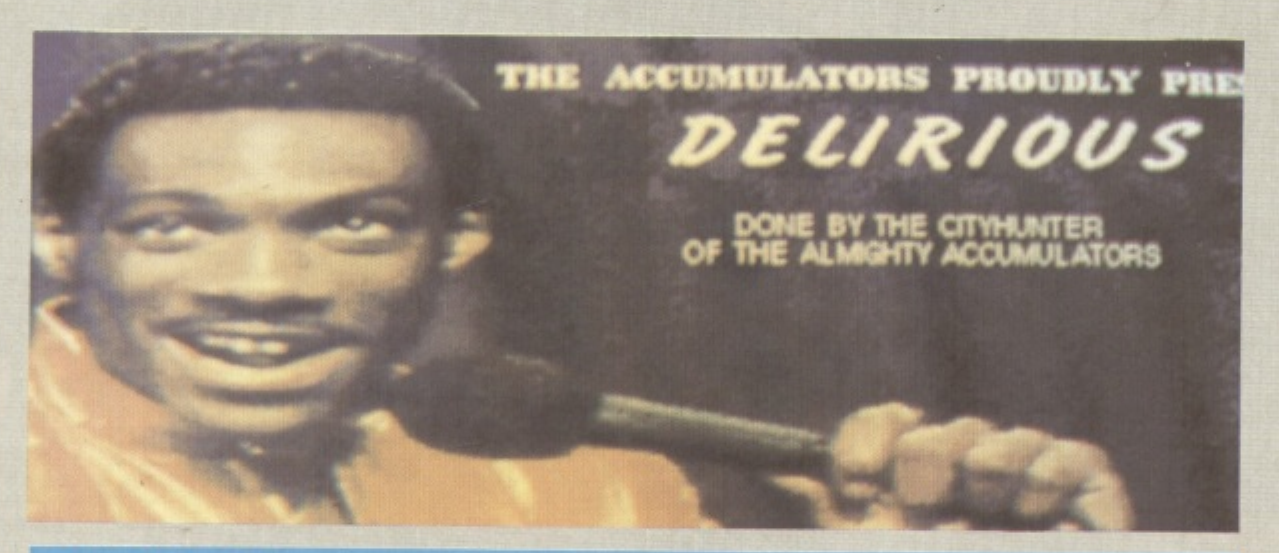




DISK 204

A The latest addition to 17 Bit's library is Buggy Commando, an interesting reworking on the **Moon Patrol** idea. It plays very similarly to Ocean's **Army Moves** (but don't let that put you off) and as far as demo games go, isn't too bad at all. A bouncy tune plays along as you bounce and blast your way through territory infested by competently defined and animated aliens. It's fiendishly difficult to play at first and some of the obstacles in the road are well-nigh impossible to jump over, but perseverence pays off. There's no way this would make the grade as a full-price game, but there's plenty of fun to be had once you get into the swing of things. At the measly asking price you can't go far wrong.





100 & 101

Another two disk affair, this time a selection of sketches sampled from Eddie Murphy's classic Delirious concert. There are seven separate sketches spread across the two disks, all selected from pull-down menus. The duration of sketches ranges between 10 and 30 seconds and some of them are good for a chuckle, although it has to be said that they're all rather risqué and even a bit naughty at times (the original video carried an 18 certificate). The constant disk swapping can get a bit tiresome if you don't have two drives, but on the whole it's a fun disk that's definitely worth a listen.





202 & 203

The long-awaited Amiga equivalent of the BIG demo featured way back in Issue One has at last arrived courtesy of Jungle Command. Entitled **Music Invasion III,** it's a menu-driven music system comprising conversions of classic Rob Hubbard Commodore 64 creations, including **Monty On The Run** and **Warhawk** to name but two.

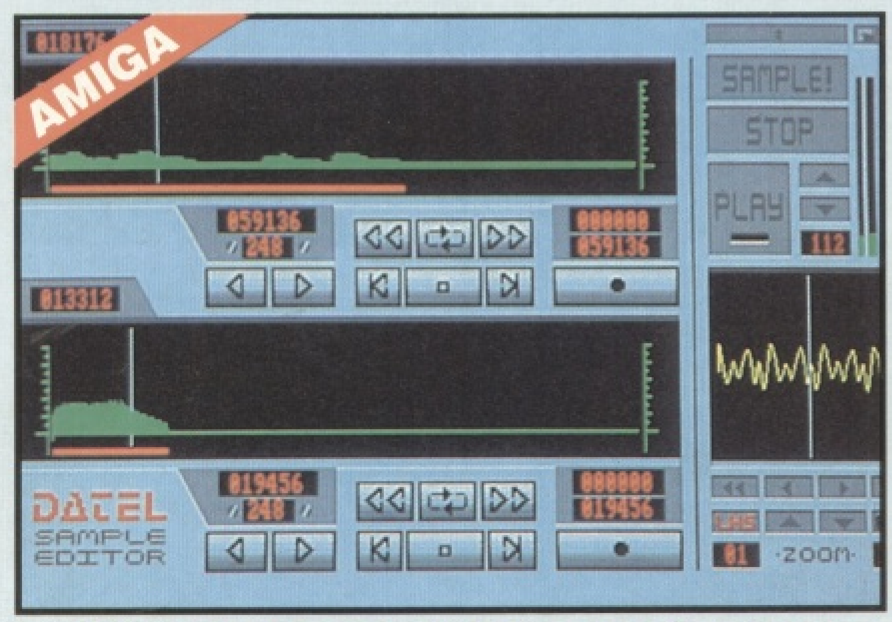
The tunes have been competently converted, although at times the choice of instruments is a bit iffy. The menu system works well, even though the loading and decrunching for each individual tune seems to take ages. To cap it all, if you get bored there's a version of **PacMan** to play. Highly recommended.

DISK 198

AEGIS Sonix is once again pushed to its limits with this novel compilation of three Acid House tunes by Mike Archer. Highlights of the disk are **Beat Dat**, a remix of **Pump Up The Volume** (sounding not unlike the ST Music Mix reviewed a couple of months back) and **Acid Anthem**, a true D-Mob style tune with some "Aaciiieeeedd" samples. Not the greatest of tunes, but fans of Acid House (if there are any left) should take a look.

Remember, if you've got an ST or Amiga demo that you want to show the world, send it to Demos, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. As of next month there's a prize on offer for the best demos printed each month. Not only is there £50 in cash up for grabs but you will also have your demo distributed on the public domain by 17 Bit Software.

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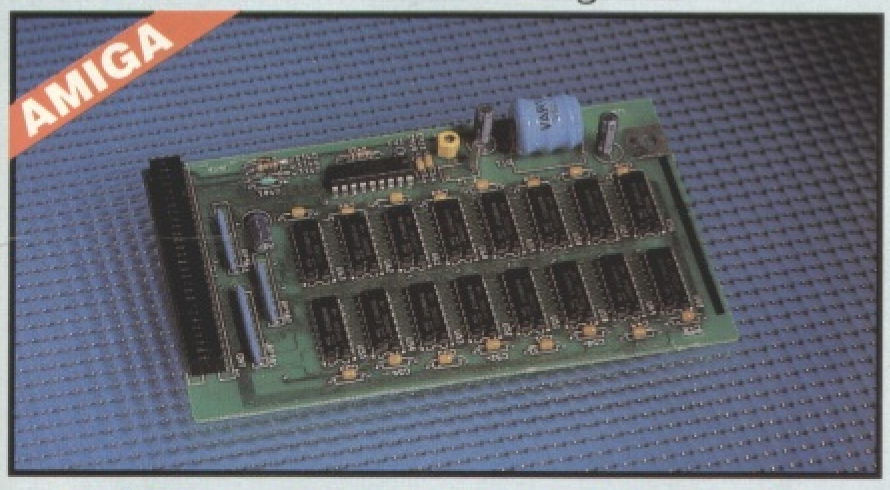
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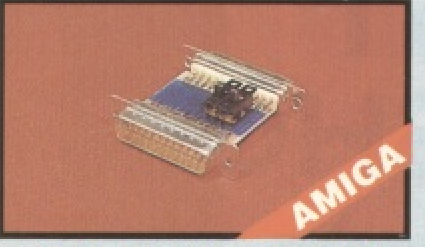


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THE LAST APOSTLE PUPPET SHOW

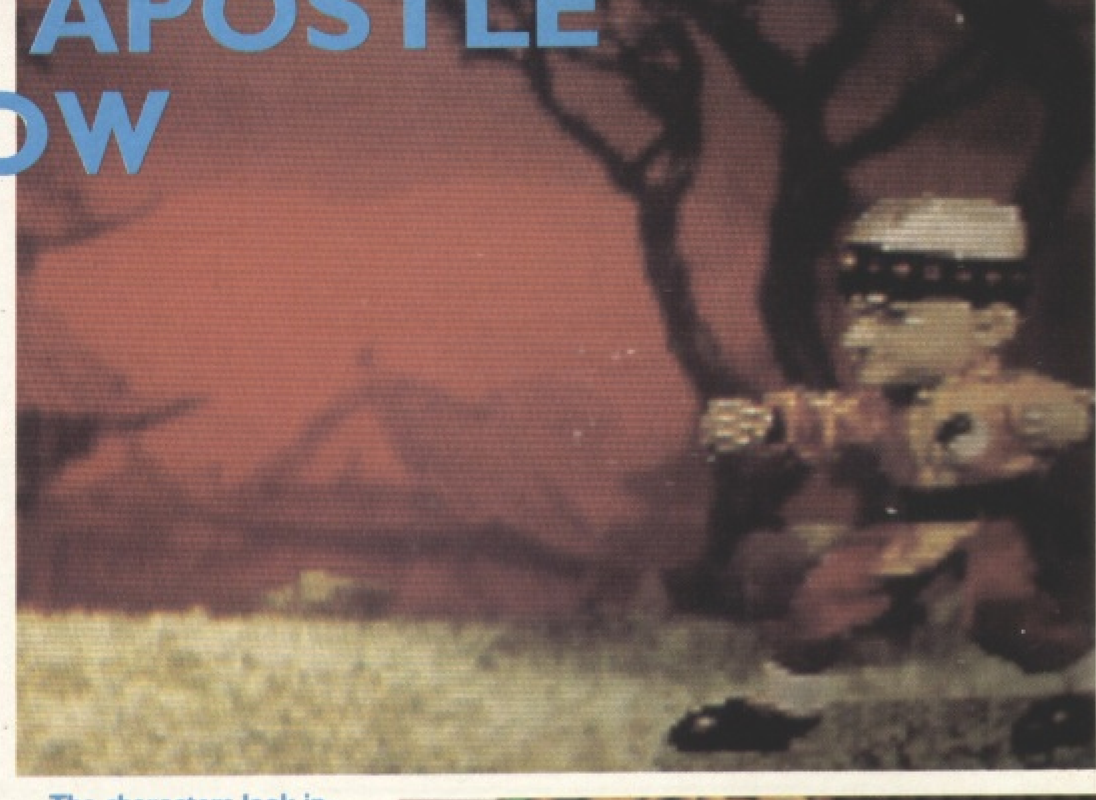


FIGHTING HAWK



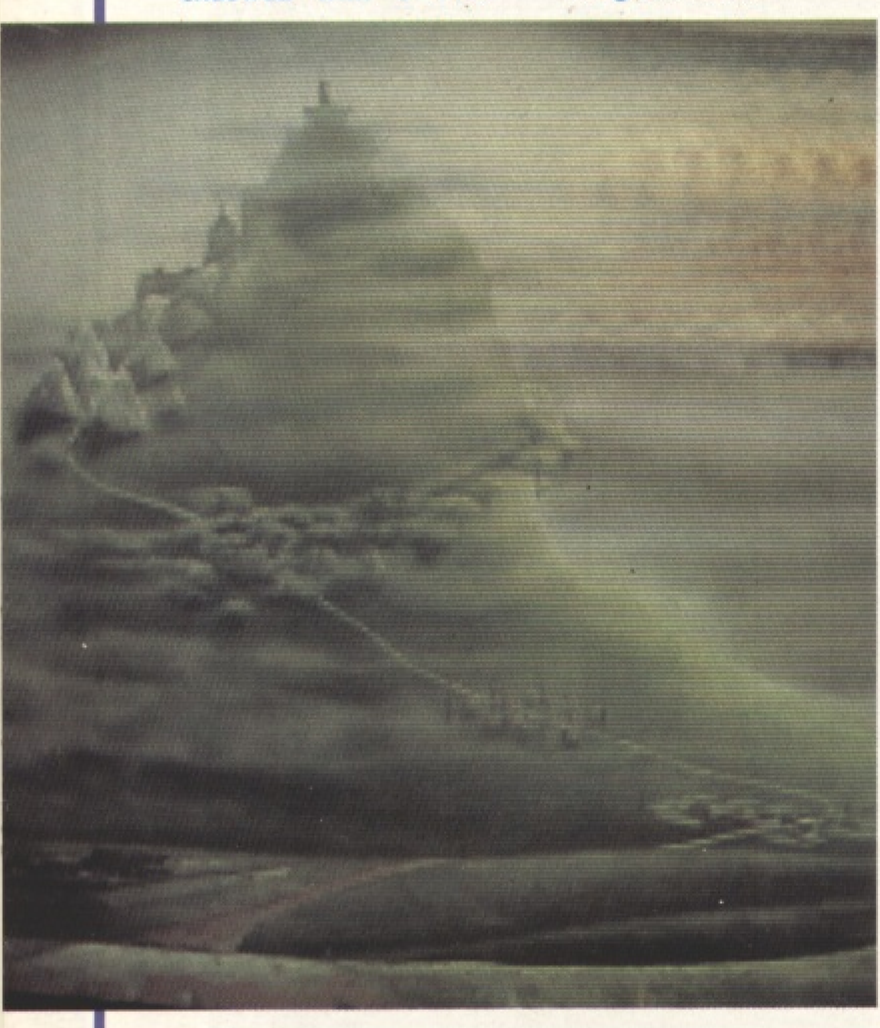
Ciarán Brennan trades his stationery and clothing vouchers for ten pence pieces and heads off to his local arcade for a spot of Xmas action... only to find that, like his Christmas socks, he's seen it all before.

THE LAST APOSTLE PUPPET SHOW (Homedata)



Forget the almost religious title, this puppet show is as mean a fighting game as you're ever likely to come up against. Set in historic China, your heroic alter-ego is pitched against a number of oriental villains armed with physical skills and endowed with a wide range of supernatural powers.

The first thing to leap off the screen is the amazing graphic-style – which isn't so much lifelike as 'marionettelike'. Forget Captain Scarlet and the Thunderbirds, this is real Supermarionation with no strings attached.



The characters look incredibly three-dimensional, and the backgrounds have so much depth that you could almost walk into them. The movement is a little jerky, but what do you expect from puppets?

So that's the graphics covered, but what exactly is the game like? Well, unfortunately it doesn't live up to the same standard. The major problem is that your character's fighting movements are severely restricted and the opposition are real experts. Consequently a game doesn't exactly last as each of the battles is a little one-sided.

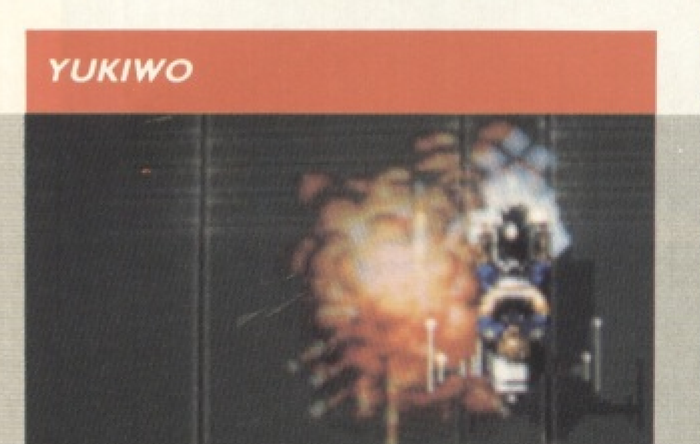
Pity really, because it may not be much of a fighting game, but it beats the hell out of Punch And Judy!



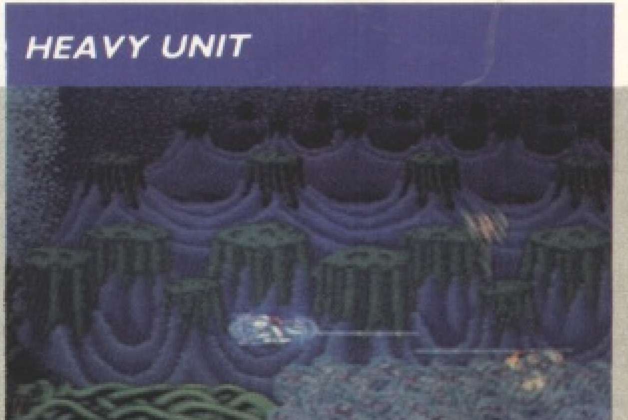




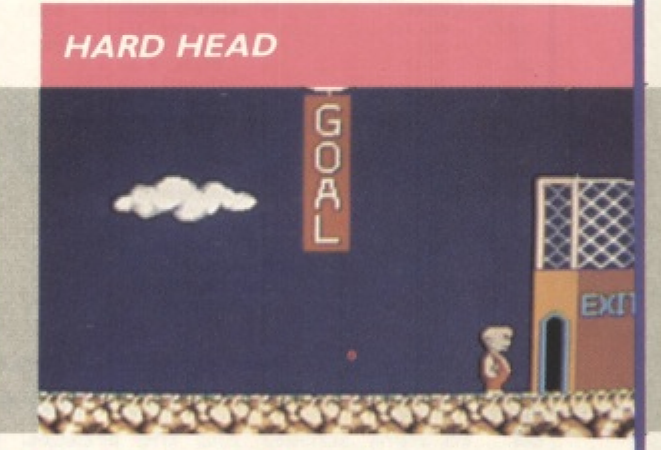
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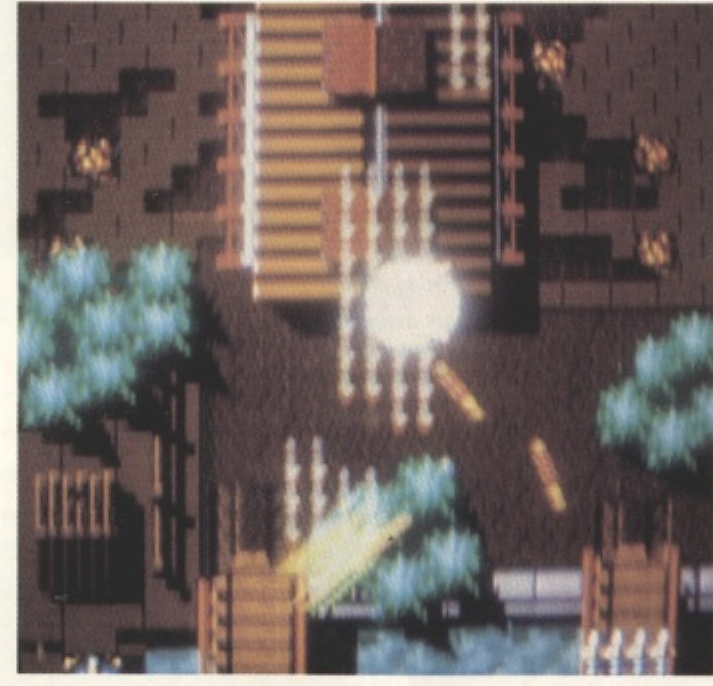
HEAVY UNIT



HARD HEAD



The lone pilot wipes the perspiration from his brow as he pushes his twin fuselage Fighting Hawk into a dive through the cloud cover. Intelligence hasn't come up with much about this mission, but it won't be long now until he finds out everything he'll ever need to know. Finally the last of the clouds that are obstructing his view disappears and... oh no. He's flown straight into a rip-off of Taito's hairy old



FIGHTING HAWK (Taito)



blaster, *Flying Shark*!

Believe it or not, Taito has chosen to rip-off one of its own – and it's difficult to see why. Other than the absence of the side to side scrolling, there's scarcely a difference between the two.

The fighter is controlled by a standard joystick and two button system; the left button activating the standard cannon and the right operating a cluster of homing missiles which clears the screen in smart bomb style.

The single scrolling jungle landscape is patrolled by enemy aircraft, dotted with tanks and gunboats and punctuated by colossal supertanks. The standard cannon is powerful enough to deal with the first attack waves, but add-ons (ie: extra firepower) are necessary to finish off the later massed attacks.

Fighting Hawk provides few frills and adequate thrills – for fans of *Flying Shark* at least.

YUKIWO (Taito)



Yukiwo's not a happy kid. His world's been turned upside down by a nuclear holocaust and now he's left alone, with nothing to call his own except a heavily armoured motorbike – and a horde of desperate men after his hide.

The bomb has turned the world into a vertically scrolling landscape which changes from level to level (or chapter as they're referred to here). The first level is an industrial wasteland, filled with war machines and robotic foot soldiers – Level Two on the other hand sees the Earth's axis shift and the land and its occupants mutate.

Astride his turbo-charged and armour-plated supercycle, Yukiwo blasts his way along the landscape utilising either of two weapons; a short range cannon which destroys targets trapped by the crosshair sight, and a long range laser which fires through the crosshair and destroys everything in its aerial path.

The scenario and gameplay may sound a little dated, but the effect is marvellous, producing the most playable shoot 'em up that I've seen in months. The sprites and backgrounds are excellent, with the animation of the foot soldiers and the impression of speed created by the exploding enemies worth a special mention.

Even if you think that you've had enough of scrolling shoot 'em ups, *Yukiwo* may surprise you.



HEAVY UNIT (Kaneko)

The ghost of R-Type returns to haunt the nation's arcades once again as another progressive left to right scroller hits the arcades. Kaneko's latest looks, feels and plays like the Irem classic, with the only additions being a superfluous 'Transformer' character and some gratuitous vertical scrolling between levels.

Like others of the 'Type', the action scrolls from left to right with enemies attacking from above and below as well as the front. The backgrounds are gorgeous, with animated machinery complementing the character's mechanised feel.

The scrolling is slow but smooth, and the collision detection is a bit loose (thankfully, as this gets the ship through some otherwise impossible situations). The best rule of thumb is to experiment with where the ship will actually fly before giving up hope.



Essentially, Heavy Unit is similar to some of R-Type's later levels – difficult but engrossing. In fact it's probably too difficult for players who've not previously experienced games of this type, but if you're an R-Type afficionado who's looking for a new challenge then this should be right up your street.



HARD HEAD (Suna)

Two cutsie characters romp along a scrolling platformed landscape, bashing bricks with their heads and collecting fruit and ice cream – sounds familiar? It should, because the Hard Head twins have borrowed more than a little style from another famous arcade family.

There's not really a great deal to say about this one: if you've already seen Super Mario Brothers (and who hasn't?), then this will hold absolutely no surprises. The gameplay's the same, a lot of the graphics are similar – in fact the only difference is the lack of originality.

There are 16 levels to be negotiated, each housing cute frogs and ducks and a range of nasty monsters to be eliminated by use of either a Hammer or Bubble Gun.





A football appears at the end of each level – kick this into the goal and it's off to the next.

Hard Head is quite a laugh, but it's all been seen before – and how good is any joke when you've already heard it? I'd only advise you to give this a try if you're one of the few people who hasn't already succumbed to 'Bros'.



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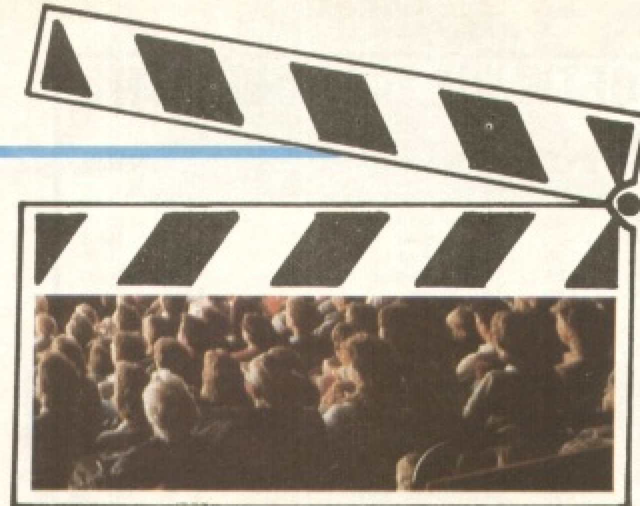
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FUTURE

Top Gun may have taken your breath away, but imagine the effect if Tom Cruise had buzzed right over your head! Paul Boughton's just experienced the cinema of tomorrow – today.

FLICKS


Early Imax films have tried to capture unique experiences both on, under and beyond our planet. Here an audience thrills to the underwater delights of the documentary film Ocean.

Your popcorn is transfixed halfway to your mouth as the spacecraft thunders into view at the bottom of the screen. Only this time it doesn't stop there. It keeps going, literally over your head, the roar of its engines following, with the 3D image filling your vision and throbbing through your ears.

You've just experienced Omnimax, the cinema of the future... and video is going to have to go some to catch up.

The latest cinematographic revolution has been a long time coming. It's the culmination of technology first hinted at in 1967 by three Canadian film makers. Their company, Imax Systems Corporation, now has 35 Imax (flat screen) and 20 Omnimax (dome screen) theatres in 15 countries, and their aim is: "to make you feel like you're there – in the film."

Imagine an image of 10 times the clarity of cinema standards currently enjoyed projected onto a screen 10 times the size. The result is a sharp, incredibly believable picture which, when combined with six-track stereo sound, never fails to amaze and astound.

But don't expect to see **RoboCop** or other recent blockbusters appearing on this system – ordinary films simply won't work. Each new project has to be planned and shot from scratch using special equipment, which is why only 60 of these movies have been made, most taking the form of nature documentaries! These may not sound like fodder for the action hungry, but a short experience of **Volcano**, which features a breath-taking view from the lip of the inferno, or **American Adventure**, a terrifyingly realistic Olympic bob-sled run, soon puts an end to this misapprehension.

And if this system isn't exhilarating enough, there's 3D Omnimax. The first such film was **We Are Born Of The Stars**, a computer graphics extravaganza showing how atomic nuclei are formed in the stars, how atoms become molecules and molecules become the complex structure of life. "A team of 100 human animators working a lifetime could not produce the stunning effects of this film," boasts Imax creator Roman Kroitor, **WABOTS** featured the red and blue specs to gain its 3D effect, but three dimensions are now possible without the use of irritating glasses.

Chris Brown, press officer for the Canadian corporation is confident that a whole new breed of films using this technology is about to be unleashed. "People are waking up to the system," she says. "Our current film catalogue has concentrated on giving the audience the chance to experience things they never will in their lives. But now directors are keen to use it for feature films – especially using the new 3D technique. There are now enough cinemas around to make it commercially viable."

If this does turn out to be the future of mainstream cinema, the public can look forward to a more realistic form of escapism than was ever dreamed possible. Anyone fancy a close encounter of the **Jaws** kind?

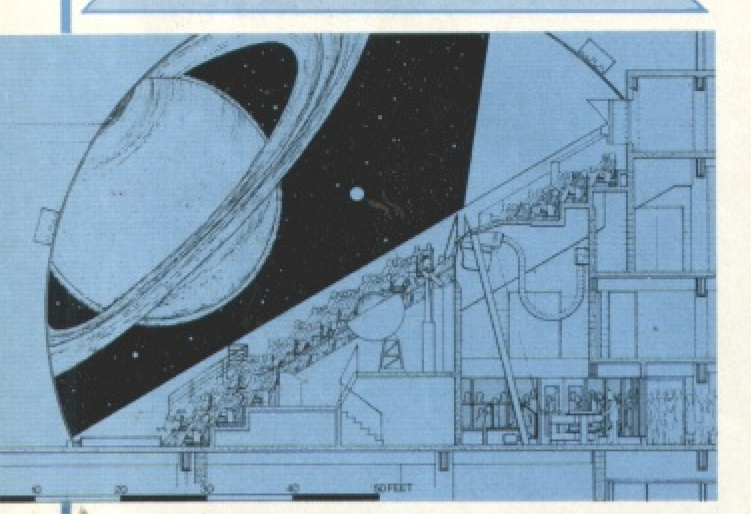
Everything about the cinema of tomorrow is huge. From the giant screens (up to seven storeys high) to the 80lb cameras needed to handle the special 70mm film, only a dozen exist worldwide and they handle 1,000 feet of film racing past the lens to record every three minutes of action. Pictures are produced lengthways, 10 times larger than conventional 35mm frames to give pin-point images. To produce the new 3D film Imax uses a polarised system with two computer-controlled cameras. Two prints and two of the huge rolling loop projectors are synchronised to achieve the effect which has people grabbing for objects they believe are suspended in space above them.



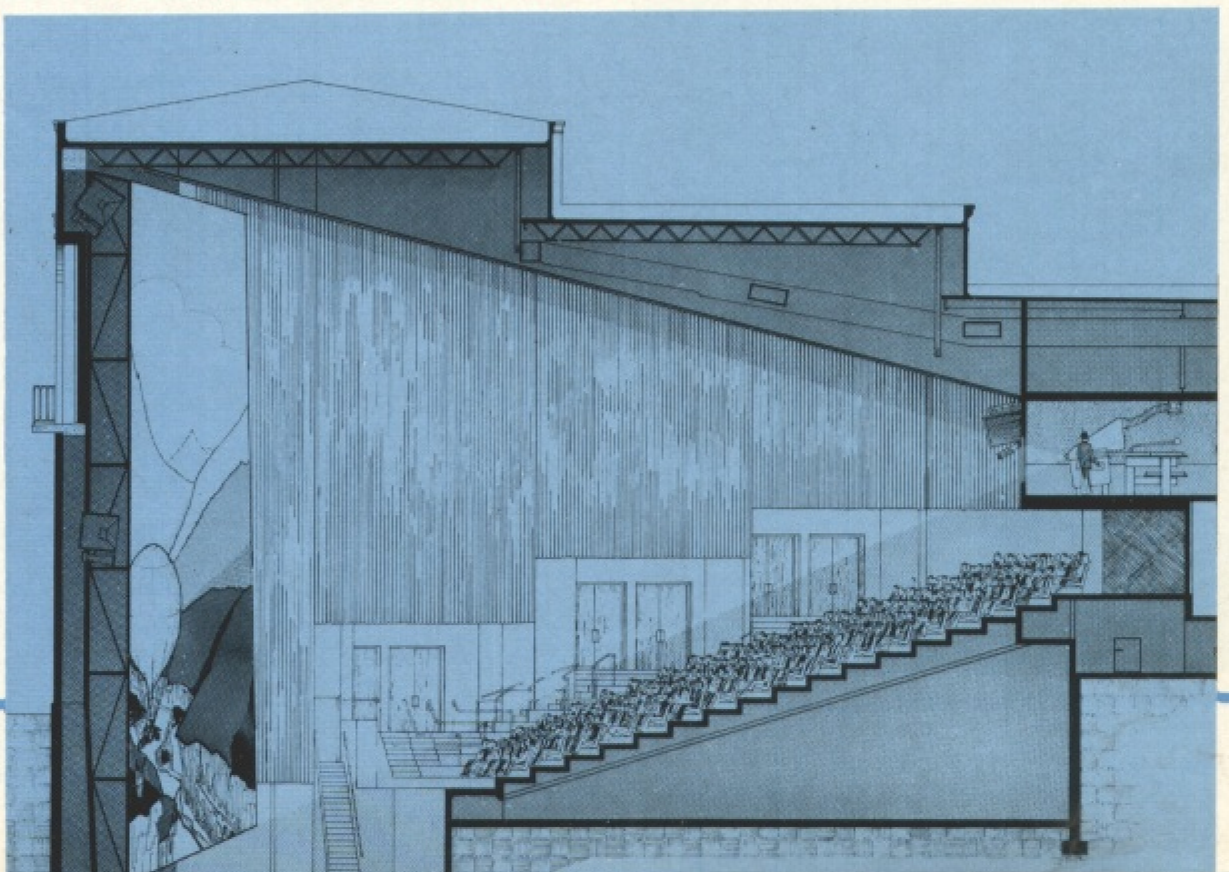
The Dream Is Alive takes you on board the US Space Shuttle Challenger as it speeds through space at 17,500 mph on a mission to repair Solar Max, a $75 million satellite which has malfunctioned. Astronauts were the cameramen for some of this spectacular outer-space footage, but most of the action shots come from an Imax camera secured to the launch-tower, looking directly down on the blast-off. The race against time to make the first ever satellite MOT in space happens just 15m or so from the audience's eyes. "Watching it," says veteran NASA spaceman Robert Crippen, "is the nearest thing to being there."

FEATURE

Bradford's Museum Of Photography, Film And Television is home to Britain's only Imax screen, similar to the theatre above. The building is dominated by the 52′4″ x 63′8″ screen and auditorium, and according to press officer, Alison Theaker: "Many of the viewers are so impressed they come back time and again to see the same film." The screen is the biggest in Britain and you can visit the projection room to see the giant machine in action, sending rolling loops of film through in caterpillar-like waves. There are performances on the hour throughout the afternoon every day except Monday, with evening showings Thursday and Friday at 7.30pm. For regular news about Imax, join the museum mailing list. Send a cheque for £2.50 to Princes's View, Bradford, West Yorkshire. Alternatively, contact Prestel 2885881 or telephone the museum on (0274) 727488.



Omnimax uses a 180 degree 'fish eye' lens, with the remote-controlled projector placed in the centre of the auditorium with the audience all around in steeply pitched rows of lean-back seats. Note the enormous domed screen for added realism – planes literally fly over your head.



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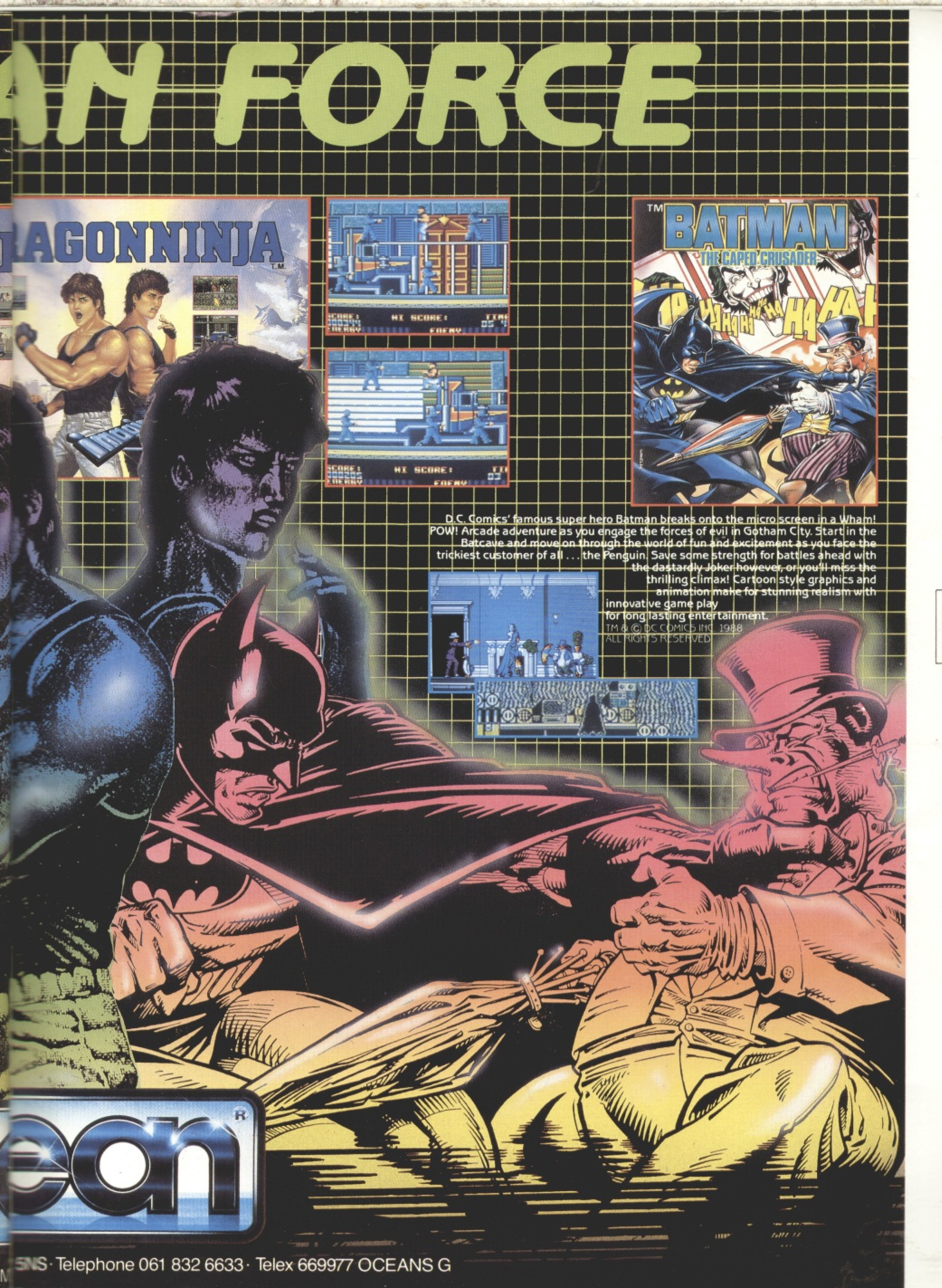
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